DIRECTIONS AND INSTIGATIONS To the Duty of PRAYER,

How, and why the heart is to be kept with diligence.

Preſſing Arguments and Directions for hearing the voice of the Rod.

Being the ſumme and ſubſtance of nine Sermons (not heretofore Printed.) By Mr. *ANDREW GRAY*; late Miniſter of the Goſpel at *Glaſgow*.

The ſecond Impreſſion, newly corrected and amended.

Coloſſ. 4. 2. *Continue in prayer, and watch in the ſame with thankſgiving.*

Prov. 23. 26. *My ſon give me thy heart.*

Pſal. 94. 12. *Bleſſed is the man whom thou chaſteneſt, O Lord, and teacheſt out of thy law.*

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To the Reader.

Christian Reader,

IT *was not the design of the Lords Servant who preached these following Sermons, to have them thus published: And if he had survived the publishing of them, and of his other Sermons already printed, (and through importunity had condescended they should be put to the Presse) they would no doubt, have come forth more refined, and better digested: and therefore be intreated,* Courteous Reader, *rather to take in good part that which is intended for the publick good, then to carp at any thing which doth not satisfie thine own* Genius; *considering that what thou hast here was gleaned by a Church writer gathering together the substance of the matter from*

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the mouth of the speakers. And although, for the most part, the expressions be the same as they were spoken; yet consider that Preaching and Writing have their several ornaments. These things which are enlivened by the expression of the Speaker, sometimes taketh well; which being committed to the Impression of the Presse, seemeth flat, superfluous, digressive, and redundant: The zealous Temper of the Speaker in delivering his Message by word, carrying him sometimes without the limits and contextures of the ordinary method.

As these Sermons were delivered with meekness and Zeal, so be careful to read them with a meek frame of spirit, to guard off all carping prejudices; and to have thy heart burning with Zeal to the consuming of soul depressing dulness.

Directi-

Directions and Instigations to the Duty of PRAYER.

SERMON I.

1 Thes. 5. 17. *Pray without ceasing.*

GOdliness is so sublime and divine a thing, and doth so highly elevate the Believer, that is endued with it, that by it he is admitted unto that high pinacle of honour, and inconceivable pitch of dignity, as to be made like unto God, and to have a glorious participation of his divine nature; so that we need not much Rhetorick to commend this unto you who have tasted of the sweetness of it; for *Wisdom will be justified of her Children*, Mat. 11. 19. But there are some of you who savor not the things of God, and to whom these things doth appear but as some *Europian* fancy; and notions of a mans brain, who are not much in contemplation of these things. So that though we could speak upon this subject in such a manner that the glorious light of it should surround us, yet the blind heart cannot see it, because there is a dungeon within; & till Christ open our eyes (as well as reveal his light) we cannot be enlightned by it. But had we once as much divine understanding, as to take it up in its beauty & necessity, in its advantage and dignities, in its comliness and equity, we should esteem it the principle thing which we have to do in all our lifetime, and should *dig for it as for hidden treasures*, Pro. 2. 4. And there is no part of this royal & beautiful ornament of godliness, but it may commend and ingratiat it self to any who

doth not close their eyes. And amongst all the beautiful effects and parts of godliness, this dutie and grace of prayer is not the least, and doth not a little commend it; and though it appear sometimes little amongst the thousands of the graces of the Spirit, yet out of it have come excellent things, and it hath not counted it presumption to compare it self with the highest and chiefest. It is that (no doubt) by which a soul is elevated to converse & talk with God, with the holy and blessed trinity; yea, and that as often and freely as the Christian pleaseth: for there is a door of access standing alwayes open, by which we may enter in, and communicat & impart our thoghts to God, and to have him making known his mind to us. O, this is a dignity & a privilege that hath been purchased unto us at an infinite rate and value, even the precious blood of christ; for, no doubt, the door of our access unto God, is through the vail of his flesh; And were this more deeply engraven upon our spirits, we should improve this dignity more, did we once believe the unspeakable highness of this duty of *prayer*, and the incomprehensible essence of God, that which we now neglect through ignorance, we should fear to meddle with it through a sort of reverence and fear, being *afraid to touch the mount, lest we should be shot thorow*, and looking upon our selves, as unworthy to lift up our eyes to heaven, because we have reproached him so often.

Now there are these two incomprehensible and cardinal evils which doth exceedingly mar & intercept the obedience of Christians unto this great and precious command of *praying without ceasing*, and they are these two, Atheism and Idolatry: too much confidence in our selves and too much leaning to our own understanding, which is idolatry; it being a visible

sible breach of the first command, *Thou shalt have none other Gods before me*, Exod. 20. 3. And too little confidence & trusting in God, which is our Atheism, imploying our selves in all, and imploying God in nothing: so that our blessed Lord may propose that inanswerable challenge & question to many of us, *Hitherto you have asked nothing in my Name*. John 16. 24. And what is this practice, but an involving of our selves in that woful curse, *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, & maketh his flesh his arm, whose heart departeth from the Lord? Should the living seek the dead, and not their God, who give to all men all things liberally to enjoy?* Jer. 17. 5. Were we dwelling more under the spiritual impression of our utter inability and impotency to save our selves, and that compleat ability and infinit power which is in him to help us, we would bind this precious command of *prayer* as a chain of gold about our neck, and make it *an ornament of grace to our head*, Prov. 4:9. We should certainly be constrained to cry forth, *All that the Lord commands us, we will do*, Deut 5. 27. And pray that there may be such a heart given to us, as to have our practice correspondent unto our resolutions.

O, what a glorious and unspeakable dignity suppose you it to be, to be daily having your walk in heaven, in those *beautiful streets that are all payed with transparent gold*, & to be conversing with him whose fellowship is of more infinite worth then all imperial dignities. A christian that is much exercised in prayer may have this to say when he is passing thorow the gates of death to long & endless eternity, that he is now to change his place, but not his company. Heaven may be to him but a blessed transition to a more constant and immediat enjoyment of God. O, what a blessed day suppose ye it shal be, when ye shal be altogether

without the reach of the necessity of this duty, an noble exercise of the grace of *prayer*? For though it be a blessed and most divine exercise, yet it involves an imperfection in its bosome; and so it must needs passe away, *when that which is perfect shal come*, 1 Cor. 13.10. O! to be much in correspondence with him, & in maintaining communion & fellowship with him, *Ask of him, and it were to the half of his Kingdom*; yea more, *whatsoever ye ask in his Name, according to his will and what he sees fit in his wisdom for your good, believing, he will grant it to you*, Matth. 21.22. and will not at all deny you. We conceive there is not such a comprehensive promise annexed to any duty as this: in a manner, it is the sweet compend and epitome of all Christian promises. What is included here? All things, no doubt, for your good are here included, and nothing of that kind is excluded. We confess, if our enjoyments were regulate according to our desires, they should come far short of that which we stand in need of, & much more they should come short of that which he is willing to give; and therefore we are blessed in this, that he walketh not in his dispensations to us by the rule of our desires, but by that precious rule of his free & condescending grace: for he is able to give unto us *exceeding abundantly*; *above all that we are able to ask or think*, Eph. 3.20. If ye would ask what is the great & eminent exercise which a Christiã ought to have while he is here below? Believe it, I could give no answer so sutable as *prayer*, this noble & precious exercise of this grace of *prayer*. And if it were asked, secondly, what ought to be the great & eminent exercise of a Christian while he is here? It is *prayer*. And if it were asked, thirdly, what it ought to be? *It* is only *prayer*. *Prayer above all things, & above all things prayer*. I mean, true, serious, sincere

sincere, and not hypocritical prayer: a pleasant retiring and diverting our selves from all other things, to wrestle with God; to leave our servants & our asses at the foot of the mount, until we go up and worship God, and bury your idols under the vale of *Sichem*, and to wash our selves from our pollutions, when we go to up *Bethel*: to return from the confused noise of the multitude of our affairs, unto the pleasant delighting our selves in God. A Christian (the sound of whose feet is much heard in the streets of *New Jerusalem*, who, in a manner, is anticipating the time of his endless enjoyment of it; & who is daily bringing down heaven unto earth, or rather elevating himself towards heaven, hearing of such an endless command as this, *pray without ceasing*, Rom. 10. 12,) is constrained to cry forth, *Lord what is man that thou should be mindful of him? Or the son of man that thou should visit him, and that thou hast so highly magnified him?* Psal 8. 4. I conceive, if a Christian would look upon all his duties of religion under a right notion and apprehension; certainly he will rather take them up as his dignity, then his duty: & rather as the singular tokens & significations of the infinite respect and love of God towards him, then any way given and commanded him: Seing by the practice of them we should testifie our thankfulnesse and obedience towards him, surely it were our servitude, and not our liberty to be freed from this blessed and glorious yoke of his commandments. O what a bondage were it for an immortal soul, not alwayes to be living in a direct line of subordination to him, but a natural man hearing of his decree and command of God coming forth, *Pray without ceasing*, will cry out, *this is a hard saying, who can hear it?* Joh. 6. 60. We ought to study to be subordinate to God

and in ſubjection unto nothing which may hinder our ſubordination unto him; And he who accounts the ſervice of the Lord a wearineſs, and doth ſnuff at it, as it were; and who never knew what it was to be bound in ſpirit, till he go to prayer; believe me, that man is not much taken up in the obedience of this noble and moſt excellent commandment, *Pray without ceaſing.*

Now being come to the words, having ſpoken at large of that radical & noble grace of faith; we are come to ſpeak of this excellent grace of *Prayer*: & I wold have none of you miſtaking the nature of this cõmand or excellent grace; or to conceive that the Apoſtle doth here ſo compendize & abridge chriſtians duties, as to confine them within this one duty & grace of *Prayer*, ſo that we ſhould conſtantly and perpetually be taken up in this exerciſe, and ſo neglect the exerciſe of all other duties. No, ſurely, this is not the meaning of the words: for the words going before the text may remove this miſtake: *Rejoice evermore*, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 16. but we conceive it holds out theſe things to us.

Firſt, that in all our lawful diverſions & interruptions from this divine exerciſe & imployment in this noble duty & grace of *Prayer*, we may be keeping our ſelves in a praying frame & diſpoſition; ſo that when occaſion preſents it ſelf to us, we may retire our ſelves from the noiſe of our ſecular affairs, and converſe with him, A practice unknown to the moſt part of the Chriſtians of this generation, who betwixt the time of their converſing with God, & their addreſſes to his Throne, gives their hearts leave to wander after many vain impertinences and to rave abroad in the path of their Idols, and *ſo intangle themſelves with the affairs of this world*; ſo that (in a manner) they

they are incapacitated for this holie & divine exercise of the duty of prayer which doth require much divine abstractednes from the world, and the things therof and much composednes of spirit, in which our involving of our selves too much in our affairs (that do but by the way belong unto us) doth so much interrupt & hinder us & his exhortatiō *pray without ceasing* holds forth unto us that there is no condition, nor estate of life wherein we can be pleased, that exeemeth us from the necessity and obedience of being much in the exercise of this noble and excellent duty of the grace of prayer. For if we be under bonds, we must pray that we may be enlarged, and if he lift up the light of his countenance upon us, we must pray that we may be helped to walk humbly with God, and to erect to our selves a dwelling in the dust, when he erecteth to us a throne in heaven, and to be enabled not to stir him up, nor awake him before he please. God hath in the depth of his infinite wisdom and unsearchable love towards man, so ordered it, that continual dependance upon him, is both our duty and dignity.

And then secondly it holds out this unto us, that in the midst of all our business, and other affairs that we go about we ought to be sending forth secret and divine ejaculations towards God; which practice was no mystery unto *Jacob*, for in the midst of his testament, having blessed six of his sons, and having other six to bless, he breaks forth with that divine thought, *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.* Gen. 49 18. neither was this a mystery unto godly *Nehemiah* who while he was standing before the King with the cup in his hand, did pray unto the Lord in this secret & silent way. Neh. 2 4 *He prayed unto the God of heavens*

And then lastly this command and exhortation *Pray without ceasing*, holds forth this unto us, that we

we ſhould lay hold; yea more, that we ſhould watch to lay hold upon every oportunity for this duty of *prayer*: yea more, that we ſhould labor for all occaſions for the enjoying of this admirable dignity, which is the ſcop of that noble command, 1 Pet. 4. 7. *But* (ſaith he) *the end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore ſober & watch unto prayer.* A practice, alace! that is not much now in requeſt, & that the chriſtians of this generation do very much undervalue and ſet at noght; & we conceive, that which doth ſo much interrupt our obedience unto this command of praying in publick and in our praying one with another, is either our Atheiſm, or our pride; we being more afraid to ſpeak before men nor to ſpeak before God, which is our atheiſm; ſo that our ſilence is rather from our reverence of men, then from our reverence of God; And then our pride hinders us from it, we being afrayed leſt going about that duty, we diſcover our nakedneſſe, and make our ſhame to appear; and in our impertinent denials of our obedience unto this deſire, we ſtudy to cover the matter with a pretext of humility, and to gain reputation amongſt men that pride is hid from our eyes, & that we walk low, when in the mean time we ſit on high places: & certainly that which doth ſo much obſtruct our liberty and our having acceſs unto God in our praying one with anogher, is our greater fear of theſe before whom we pray than of him whom we pray to; and, no doubt, the divine impreſſion of a Deity upon our hearts, would much help us to get this overcome. Or it is our pride that hinders us from high thoughts of God, & hinders and interrupts this holy & divine exerciſe of the grace of prayer, even our ſelves; which is the great *Diana* which we ſo much adore: & about the adoring of which and her ſilver ſhrines (to to ſpeak) ſo much of our

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talk and labour is spent; we still proposing that woful end in all our actions, the exalting of our self, and attaining reputation amongst men; and therefore it comes to passe, that there is little or no advantage redounding to us by the exercise of publick prayer: so that we may say that which one spak to another purpose, *Cum inter homines fui minor homine redivi*: for we may say this, that when we have been amongst christians, we do oftentimes return lesse Christians: for if in our praying one with another, we be answered according to the idols of our heart, and have liberty of words, and perhaps some real access to the throne of grace, when God lifts us up, we lift up our selves, *being exalted above measure, and sacrificing to our own net*, and making a secret feast to our *Dagon* within the temple of our hearts, proving our selves to be but empty *vines bringing forth fruit unto our selves*, *Hos.* 10. 1. and hence it is (if a Christian will observe it) that he doth not much advance in the work of mortification by his publick enlargements, & that the power of iniquity in him is not much restrained by these, but presently after his weeping over himself for some short coming, some new tentation presenting it self unto him, envolves him in the like, or (it may be) in a worse sin: and ordinarily our publick enjoyments and enlargements are not constant and permanent by our quenching his holy Spirit.

However, by the way we would say that which a heathen said, it is much for a man to be as serious alone in the exercise of his mind & affections in pursuing after these duties, as when he is in company, and that which exceedingly hinders a mans obedience when he is alone unto this cõmand, *pray without ceasing*, is either the want of a solid cõviction of the necessity of this duty or else it flows from a not being deeply cõvinced

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of the advantage that may be found in this exercise of our secret retirements with God and obstructing our selves from the noise of the world, to converse with him. What joy in the holy Ghost? what mortification of our idols? what divine comformity and likeness to the Lords blessed and glorious Image might we attain to by this? As likewise we may superadd this, the want of the solid conviction of these unspeakable disadvantages that are to be found in our wosul neglecting, and sinful suspending of the exercise of this duty when we are alone, which are best known to these which are most conversant with their own spirit: but sure we are *through the sloathfulness of our hands, our house droppeth thorow, and our building doth decay*: and we are become remarkable servants unto our own lusts and corruptions.

Now is there any of you that at the very reading of these words, *pray without ceasing*, may not retire himself, and judge himself eminently guilty of the breach of this commandment and excellent duty? that whereas *Eliphaz* did accuse *Job*, *Thou restrainest prayer before God*, *Job* 15,4. surely he may justly charge it upon many; yea, and alace! upon the most part of the christians of this generation, there are many I fear, here, who do passe under the notion of Saints and real Christians, who never did much study to obey this cõmand, there are many here who need not much arithmetick to calculat all their prayers that they have poured out before his throne. O! whither is your devotion gone? If *David* and *Daniel* were now alive, would not their practice condemn the Christians of this generation, who at morning, at noon, and at the evening tide did call upon him, yea, in the silent watches of the night, and at midnight did rise *& seek their maker, who gives unto his own their songs*

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in the ſaddeſt night of their affliction? we conceive alſo if *Anna* that precious woman were now alive to whom that excellent teſtimonie is given, *Luk* 2.37. *She was a widow about fourſcore four years, which departed not from the Temple but ſerved God with faſting and praying night and day*, might not ſhe provoke many women, yea all men & women unto an holy emulation in this ſo ſingular and divine a practice? Alace, there is none now a dayes upon whom ſo brave a teſtimony could be paſſed as was upon her. We muſt either conceive that the way to heaven is more eaſie then it was before in ancient times, or elſe that there is not ſo much delight & ſolace to be had in him, as was before: were we daily taſting of that *pure river of life that flows out from beneath the Throne of God*, & of its ſweetneſſe, *which cauſeth the lips of thoſe that are aſleep to ſpeak*. we would be more waken up in giving obedience unto this precious command of *prayer*, and if we were ſleeping more in the bed of love, we would be leſs ſleeping in the bed of ſecurity; we would likewiſe imbrace more abſtractedneſſe from the world & more familiarity with God. O, but our viſits are rare, becauſe we are not conſtant in prayer, and fervent in ſpirit, ſeeking the Lord. It is no wonder that we forget what an one he is, becauſe it is long ſince we did behold him: We may forget his form and lovlineſſe, there is ſuch a number of dayes and woful ſpace of time interveening betwixt our enjoyment of him.

Now we ſhal not dwell long in pointing out into you what prayer is, we conceive it is a ſweet traveſling & trafficking of the ſoul betwixt emptineſſe and fulneſſe, betwixt want and all-ſufficiency, and betwixt our inability to help our ſelves, and his ability to help us; the one depth calling upon the other depth, or in ſhort, it is a ſouls conference with God.

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Neither shal we stand in the proving of this unto you, that it is the duty of a christian to be much taken up in the continual exercise of this duty of prayer, the Text doth sufficiently prove it; But we shal only for the more ful clearing of this, point out one place of Scripture, and that is in *Eph.* 6, 18. where we are exhorted to *pray with all manner of prayer and supplication &c.* which we conceive to be understood both of publick and private prayer, and that we should watch to the exercise of both these & that we should not be in the exercise of these by starts and fits, but that we shold continue in them with all perseverance as the Text doth clearly hold forth.

Neither shal we insist long in speaking unto this, what is the spirit of prayer; We conceive it doth not stand in that promptness & volubility of language that we use before him, for there may be much of that, & little of the spirit; and upon the contrair, there may be little of that or nothing at all, and yet much of the spirit; yea, we are certain that the spirit is sometimes an impediment unto much language, for either in our presenting or expressing our grief before God, our spirits are so overwhelmed within us, and so troubled, that we cannot speak, so that sighs or silent groans are rather our oratrie then the multitude of words. So likewise in the exercise of joy, the soul is so filled, and in a manner, overshadowed with the holy Ghost, that the Christian is rapt up in holy admiration and astonishment; so that in a manner he loses not only the exercise of invention, but also the exercise of speech; he is so much taken up in gazing at that which he doth enjoy, and in a pleasant beholding and contemplation of him who hath ravished him *with one of his eyes, and with one chain of his neck*, so that he can speak no more, but beginneth to wonder

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his tongue cleaveth to the roof of his mouth, and his judgement is so confounded with the inexpressable sweetness and glory of him that appeareth, and his affection doth so swell and run over all its banks, that in a manner, he is clothed with a blessed impossibility to have the use of his tongue, & therefore is beginning to admire that which he cannot speak; however he that hath much of these things, hath nothing over, and he that hath little, hath no lack.

Neither doth the spirit of prayer consist in the fineness and eloquency of our dictions, these things being rather to prove our selves Orators, then such as pray in the holy Ghost.

But we conceive it doth more consist in the voice of the affections, nor in the voice of words, & in having inexpressable and unutterable sighs and groans of the spirit, which is indeed that true spirit of adoption which he hath given unto us, whereby we cry unto him *Abba Father*, Gal. 4. 6. If we speak no more in prayer then what our affections and souls do speak, truly we would not speak much; if we speak more with zeal & affection, that vain prolixity that we have in this duty of prayer, would be much compendized and abridged. Neither shal we speak long on this, how much it is of a christians concernment to be cõvinced of the absolute necessity of a Mediator, & of a dayes-man that must lay his hands upon us in all our approaches to God, & truly we conceive if many of you were posed when last the deep impression of the need that you have of Jesus Christ and of him that hath taken that glorious title & attribute unto himself of being the *Counseller* Is. 9 6 were engraven upon your spirits when ye went to prayer, you should find it a difficulty to fal upon the number of the dayes; and I conceive that the want of the right apprehensions and uptakings of God and of

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our selves, is the reason why this great mystery & divine duty of the Gospel, to wit, the imploying of Jesus Christ in prayer, is so great a mystery both unto our judgements and affections. However know that this is a duty belonging both to your knowledge and practice. There are many Christians who to their own apprehensions, have made a great progresse in the course of Christianity, who yet may turn back and learn that great and fundamental lesson to call on his Name, sure we are, were this more believed, that God *is a consuming fire* without Jesus Christ, we would not be so presumptuously bold as to approach before God, either in publick or in private without him who by his blood must quench this divine flame, and who must remove that Angel that stands with the *flaming sword* in his hand, marring our access to God; Christ must be to us *Melchisedeck*, *a King of righteousnesse and of peace*. He no doubt, is that trysting place in which God and sinners must meet: he is that glorious ladder that reaches from heaven unto earth, by which we must ascend up to God: his humanity (which is the foot of that ladder) is the door of our accesse by which we must ascend to the top, which is his divinity we did once by our iniquity fix a gulf betwixt God & us; but Jesus by taking on him our nature did make a golden bridge over that gulf, by which we may go over and converse with God.

And first, surely want of the conviction of this, doth make us come with lesse confidence unto him: for upon what can ye build your hope, except it be upon that *stone of Israel*, *and on his beloved Son in whom he is well pleased*? *Mat.* 3.17. we ought to rest upon him who is that *Immanuel God with us*.

2. As likewise the want of this, is the cause of the little reverence that you have to God in your approaches unto

unto him; for did we once take him up under this notion, how inaccessible God is except he be made accessible by him who *is the way, the truth, and the life,* John 14.6. O, how would we fear to draw near to such a holy God.

And this likewise is the occasion of the little delight we have in conversing with him, we are perswaded that there is no delight in this blessed exercise, but through him who is the *vision of peace* betwixt the Father and us; his divine nature is an impregnable rock which we cannot scale but by his humane nature, and we must make use of Christ in all our approaches to God not only as one who must give us access unto him, & open a door unto us, through which we must enter into the holiest of all, (he must draw aside the vail that is hanging over his face, & we must go in walking at his back, as is clear, Rom 5.2.) But we must likewise make use of Christ in all our approaches unto God as one by whom we must be enabled to do every thing he calleth for at our hands: If the faith of that saying which is in John 15.5. *Without me ye can do nothing,* were more deeply engraven upon, and stamped on the tables of our hearts, we would be walking alongst our pilgrimage with the sentence of death in our bosome, and have our confidence fixed on him above. For there is not only an inability in our selves to do any thing, but also we are cloathed with a woful impossibility, as that word doth hold forth, *Without me ye can do nothing,* And certainly the lower we will descend in the thoghts of our own strength, we are the more fit to receive this divine influence from him by which we are capacitated & inabled for the doing of every duty. We must likewise make use of Jesus Christ in all our approaches unto God as one before whom all our prayers must be accepted before *him:*

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the ſacrifices of *Judah* cannot come up with acceptance upon that golden altar before the throne, except they be preſented by him *who is that great maſter of requeſt*. This is clear from *Rev.* 8. where by the Angel that is ſpoken of there, we underſtand to be the meſſenger of the Covenant; and by that incenſe, we underſtand the merits of Jeſus Chriſt, which is that precious vail that is ſpread over theſe ſinful imperfections of our duties, which they muſt be mixed with, before they be an acceptable ſavor unto God. O! how doth he abominate and abhor all our prayers, if they want this precious ingredient, that ſweet ſmelling incenſe the merits of our bleſſed Lord Jeſus Chriſt? it is he that doth remove all theſe rovings, and vain impertinences of ours, that we have in the exerciſe of that duty, & doth preſent them in a more divine frame & contexture. He reduces them into few words, & makes them more effectual for the obtaining of our requeſts. If the conſideration of this were more with us, O how would it make Jeſus Chriſt more precious in our eyes? As likewiſe it would diſcover unto us a more abſolute neceſſity in having our recourſe to him in all our approaches to God; ſuch is the depth of the unſearchable grace of Chriſt, and of his infinite love towards ſinners, that the voice of complaining on them was never heard in heaven. Chriſt he never ſpake evil, but alwayes good of believers before his Father, notwithſtanding he hath oftentimes ſpoken reproofs to themſelves: this is clear from *John.* 17. 8. where giving an account of the carriage and practice of his diſciples unto the Father, he doth exceedingly commend their faith, and their carriage towards him, and ſaith, *They have received me, and have known ſurely that I came out from thee; and they have believed that thou didſt ſend*

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ne, and yet in *John* 14. 1. he doth challenge their unbelief; the one ſpeech he directeth to God his Father, and the other he directeth unto them. Love in a manner, doth ſilence all the noiſe of complaints with him; and maketh him alwayes breath out love in his expreſſions of them before the throne. He will whiles ſpeak roughly to believers here to themſelves; but to ſay with reverence to his bleſſed Name, he never telleth an ill tale of them behind their backs.

But now we ſhal inſiſt a little in pointing out what things are convenient and ſuitable for a chriſtian to exerciſe himſelf into, before he go about this divine and holy duty in converſing and ſpeaking to God.

And firſt, we think a chriſtian before he come and take upon him this holy and divine exerciſe of talking with God, he muſt be much in the exereiſe of meditation, not only of the inconceivabe highneſſe and digniity of that glorious & inexpreſſable perſon with whom he is to converſe: but alſo upon the inconceivable baſeneſſe and lowneſſe of himſelf; ſo that by the conſideration of the highneſſe of the one, he may be provockt to reverence, and by the conſideration of the other, he may be provockt to loathing.

2. A Chriſtian before he go to prayer, would ſtudy to have a deep impreſſion of theſe things which he is to make the matter of his ſupplication of to God, and to have them engraven upon his heart: and truly we think the want of this is oftentimes the occaſion of that woful evil of lying unto the holy Ghoſt; for we complain in prayer, and perſonate or counterfeit reſentment for theſe things which never before was the grief of our hearts. Oftentimes we ſpeak many things with our lips, ere we ſtudy to heave our hearts

ready:

endyting these things that we speak, And likewise in the exercise of blessing and praising him, from the consideration of any great or desirable mercy, we do personate and feign joy from the consideration of these things which before we never made the matter of our joy; because they never were much the matter of our consideration: It were, no doubt, the great advantage of the Christian in the exercise of prayer to be much taken up in the obedience of this command, *Eccles.* 5. 2. *Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God, for God is in heaven and thou upon earth therefore let thy words be few.* Seldom doth the Christian talk or speak with God, but if he had as much grace as to reflect upon it, he may be convinced that he is uttering things that are not fit to be spoken to God. O to be studying that divine abrigment of our prayers, which no doubt, would make us to speak nothing before him, but what our hearts doth endite, there is something of this holden out in the practice of *David*; *Psal.* 45. 1. where he beginneth with that, *My heart doth endite a good matter*: and then he subjoyns, *My tongue is as the pen of a ready writer.* Our oratry might be more refined and confined likewise; and it would be more effectual for the obtaining of our desires, if we were studying this. O that our hearts might speak more in prayer, & our tongues less, we through the multitudes of business produce multitudes of dreams to our selves.

Thirdly, this is likewise requisit for a Christian before he go to prayer, to be studying holiness, to be endeavoring to have these filthy garments wherewith he is clothed, changed; with change of rayment, he must put off the shoes off his feet, because he is to go *to stand upon a holy ground.* This was the commend-

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ble practice of that holy man *David*, *Pſ.* 26. 6. *I will waſh my hands in innocency, ſhen will I compaſs thine altar, O Lord.* This is likewiſe clear from *Exod.* 30. 18. 19. where *Aaron* and the ſons of *Levi* were to waſh their hands and their feet in that brazen laver that did ſtand betwixt the Tabernacle of the congregation and the Altar when they came near to miniſter or burn offerings by fire unto the Lord; We muſt likewiſe endeavor much to ſymbolize that practice, and to have our ſelves waſhen in that laver of regeneration, & in that *precious fount in that is opened unto the houſe of David for ſin and for uncleanneſs, Zech.* 13. 1. before we enter in the holieſt of all. What ornament is ſo ſuitable for one that is walking unto that higher place, but that glorious ornament of holineſs without which we are rendered unacceptable to God and with which we may with confidence & boldneſs go and ſerve him in his holy Temple? No doubt, if the deep impreſſion of that abſolute holineſſe, and purity of that Majeſty with whom we are to converſe (when we go to prayer) were engraven upon our ſpirits, we ſhould ſtudy to be like him; for the foundation of friendſhip fellowſhip doth ſomewhat ſtand in a ſimilitude of natures and ſome in conformity one with another.

§ And laſtly, when a Chriſtian is going to prayer he aught to be much in the conſideration of that advantage and dignity that is to be found in the exerciſe of this duty, this would make us more ardent and ſerious in the ſtudy of the former? and unleſſe we ſuperadd this to the reſt, we cannot long continue in a conſtant endeavor, after the attainment of theſe three former qualifications, who are required of one that would approach unto God.

Now we ſhal ſhut up our diſcourſe by ſpeaking a little

little unto this, what ought to be the ſweet compani
of a chriſtian that is going about the exerciſe of th
duty, in a ſerious, and not in a hypocritical manne
1. He wold ſtudy to have his ſpirit under the deep im
preſſion of a deity; and take up this, that he is talk
ing with one, before whom angels (theſe glorious and
excelent ſpirits) do cover their faces with their wings;
which, no doubt, doth point out tha: holy reverence
that they have of him: their long familiarity and con-
ſtant converſing with God, hath not removed that
due & convenient diſtanee which they ought to keep
with him and certainly were he known to us by none
other Name, but by the Name of being *merciful*, yet
ought we to fear the Lord, and his goodneſs, O how
much more he being made known & revealed to us by
that great & terrible Name *Jehovah*, by which *he is ex-
alted above all Names that is in heaven, or in earth?*
Phil. 2. 9. And by which is pointed out that infinite
diſtance, that is betwixt God and us. No doubt, if the
impreſſion of a Deity were with us, it would remove
much formality that we uſe in prayer; it would like-
wiſe remove much of our misbelief that we have in all
our approaches unto him, were we afraid leſt that woe
ful inſcription that *Paul* did diſcern to be engraven on
an Altar at *Athens*, *to the unknown God*, were found
on us, alace! I fear it may be engraven on moſt part
of our devotions, and likewiſe that wherewith Chriſt
did callenge the people of *Samariah*, he may challen
many of us *John* 4. 23. And it may be written on ou
practice *ye worſhip, ye know not what*: we are as thoſe
who *bleſs an idol*, and no doubt, ſuch ſacrifices as theſe
are, *as if we were offring ſwines blood, and cutting
off a dogs neck, which are abomination unto God*,
Eſa. 66. 3.

2. That ſhould be the ſweet companion of a chri-
ſtian

in this exercise of prayer, the excellent grace of humility: we must put off our ornaments, and cloath our selves with sackcloath, and spread ashes upon our heads, when we begin to speak to him. He that sits nearest the dust sits nearest the heavens. We must be walking under the impression of this, that we are not worthy to lift up our eyes to heaven; and with holy *Abraham* (upon whose effigy this was engraven, *Jam.* 2.23. *That he was a friend of God*) when he begins to talk to this glorious & incomprehensible Majesty, in a manner, he conceived it to be presumption, *Gen.* 18. 27. *Behold I now*, saith he, I *have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord which am but dust and ashes*, He doth prefix a note of admiration, *behold!* importing so much that it was a bold adventure for so low a person to speak to so high a Majesty; or for so sinful a creature to open his mouth unto so pure and spotless an one; that the footstool should speak to him who is the Throne; and no doubt, were this more our exercise, we might be receiving more remarkable significations of his respect and love towards us. What is the royal gift which he giveth to these that are humble? *Grace*; For as the Apostle saith, *James* 4.6. *He giveth grace to the humble*, &c. His love is seeking that person that sits lowest, even as the waters do seek the lowest ground. He that is first in his own estimation, is last in the estimation of God: but he that is last in his own estimation, is amongst the first in the estimation of God. Therefore, no doubt, that is a suitable cloathing for a person that is to go to the court of heaven which the Apostle *Peter* doth require, 1 *Pet.* 5.5. *Be cloathed with humility*. O! but that woful evil of pride which doth either arise from our ignorance of our selves, or from our ignorance of God, doth both obstruct our access unto him, and the return of our

prayer; If we should give a discription of the persons that is admitted to detain Christ in his galleries, we could not give it in more convenient and suitable termes nor this, that he is *a humble and contrite spirit*, *Isa.*66.2. and 57.15.

And a third sweet companion of a Christian in the exercise of this duty of prayer, is faith and confidence in God; but we have to do with one who is *the hearer of prayer*, & who is willing to give unto us all things that we desire if, we ask in faith, for we must exercise faith, not only upon his promises, but likewise upon that glorious & incommunicable attribute of God that is given unto him, *Psal.*65.2. that he is *the hearer of prayer*: want of this, maketh us cõme little speed, and we think likewise, that the want of this doth make us live so little in expectation, and wait with patience & hope at the posts of his door, untill we receive a return. Is it any wonder that our prayers be *as the beating of the air, and the pouring out of some empty words*, if we be not convinced in this, that he is not like unto us? God is not like *Baal*, who because of sleep, or some other business cannot give present audience to our desires, so that we need not be cõstrained to cut our selves with knives, or to leap upon the Altar, to provoke him to cause fire to descend upon out altar, to burn our drowned sacrifices; he is able to give audience to us, as if there were no other to imploy him. Multitudes of supplications will be no interruption unto the audience of our desires: he hath that royal prerogative, and eminent excelency above all Judges of the earth, that he can take in many bills at once, which is a demonstration of the omnipotency & infinite understanding and knowledge of God, if that word, *Mat.* 22.21.22. were believed, *whatsoever you ask in prayer, believing you shal receive it.* O! how would w

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study to have this necessary and sweet companion of faith going alongst with us in all our prayers, and as James speaketh, chap. 1. 6. *He that asketh, let him ask in faith, for he that wavereth and doubteth is as the waves of the sea, and can receive nothing.*

4. A fourth sweet companion in the exercise of prayer, is fervency. Can we live under such a woful delusion, as to conceive that God heareth those suits and petitions which we do scarcely hear our selvs, can we have much zeal in proposing our desires when we do it with such a woful indifferency? We have the example of that holy man *David*, to commend this unto you, Ps. 39. 12, where we may behold a glorious gradation and climax: for first he sayes, *hear my prayer*; and that not being sufficient, he doth ascend one step higher, and saith, *Hold not thy peace at my cry*; that voice being a little louder than the voice of prayer: and yet again he ascendeth on step farther and saith, *hold not thy peace at my tears*. These silent cryes, the tears of a Christian, have most Rhetorick & the loudest voice in heaven, these sweet emanations and flowings out of water from that precious fountain of a contrite and broken spirit, they do, no doubt, ascend high, and have great power with him who is *Almighty*. *Jacob*, in a manner did hold that Angel that wrestled with him with no other cord, but with the cord of supplications, as is clear from *Hos.* 12. 4. and in *Gen.* 32 26. Did ever your eyes behold such cords and bonds made of tears? No doubt, these are of a beautiful frame and contexture, & of infinite more value then the most precious and rare chains that the greatest Princes in the world doth wear as ornaments, & truely the want of this doth proceed from the want of the solid conviction of the absolute neces-

that we stand in of these things: for as one said well; strong necessities make strong desires. And also it doth proceed from the want of the consideration of the precious excellencies that are to be had in these things that we ask, the eminency of a thing doth encrease the vigor of our pursuit after it, and maketh us with seeking of it, mount up with wings as Eagles, over all these difficulties that lye as impediments in our way, ought we not to be emulous of the practice of *Ninive*, of whom this is recorded, *that they cryed mightily to God*, Jon. 3, 8. we think many christians of this generation (because of their wofull remisness & coldness of affection in proposing their desires) may be constrained to mourn over all their mournings, and pray over all their prayers.

Now if a Christians heart be the Temple of the holy Ghost, O, how ought he to pray? For it is the diamond which the apostle puts in the upshot of all the graces of the spirit, *Eph.* 6. 18. and after which he exhorteth a Christian seriously to pursue. Oh, I think it is a mystery that we cannot well take up; but these that are most in the exercise of it, can best resolve it, & take up its precious effect; but believe me, I think it is one of the most dark mysteries that is to be found in the practice of a Christian, except he in whom is all *the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, do unfold this one divine sentence, *pray without ceasing*, it shal always remain a mystery to our obedience, it is a question we confess, that is sometime difficult to determine whether some duties of a christian that are cōmanded to be done by us, be more mysterious to our understanding to take up the nature of them, and what is commanded in the lively and spiritual exercise of such a duty? Or whether they be more mysterious to us in our practice and obedience? We confess, it holdeth

eth not alike in all things, it being more easie for us to know, then to practice many things; we conceive it holdeth out in some, and even in those things and duties that are most obvious (as we conceive) and that have least of the mysteriousnesse of the Gospel engraven upon them, &c.

SERMON II.

1 Thes. 5. 17. *Pray Without ceasing.*

IT were for our great advantage to be much taken up in a serious & divine consideration of that most sad, but most true saying, *That many are called, but few chosen*; yea if there were but one of each twelve that are within this house to day, to whom Christ thus (sadly) should speak, *One of you will betray me*, ought ye not all to be put to a holy inquiry & search, and say unto him, *Master, is it I? Master, is it I? and to be exceeding sorrowful*, untill that concerning question be determined unto you? How much more ought ye to accomplish a secret and serious search, to know whether or not *ye be written amongst the living in Jerusalem, and have passed from death to life*? seeing a'ace! I think it is more probable, that if precious Christ were to speak to each twelve that are within this house, we are afraid that he should thus (sadly) speak, there are eleven of you that shal betray me, and one only shal pass free, And, O that the number of those who are to betray the precious son of God, were reduced to so few, though indeed these be many.

If he *who seeth not as man seeth, who reproveth*

not after the hearing of the ear, nor after the seeing of the eye, (who can reject an *Eliab*, the more fair in shew and appearance, and can choose a skripling like *David*) were to come to give his verdict, and passe his sentence on all of us that are here; ah! upon how many of our foreheads might be engraven this dreadful sentence, *Mene, Mene, tekel upharsin: thou art peigbed in the ballance, and art found light*; I am afraid that even some professors) *who have a form of godliness, and yet have not the power thereof*; *and are like those painted sepulchres, that are fair without, but within are full of dead mens bones*, he shal reject their confidence, *and cut off their hopes as a spiders web*, Religion that is pure and undefiled, is another thing then we take it to be: We must not go to heaven in a bed of roses, we must *strive and earnestly contend to enter in at the strait gate*: And if ye wold have a discription & definitiõ of those that are shut out from the presence of the Lord, who are of that woful number, to whom *Tophet is ordained of old*, the Psalmist giveth a description of them *Psal* 14. 4. *They call not upon God*. But if we conceive that this is the description of these that shal be eternally secluded from Gods presence, that they pray not unto God, ye will think that ye are not of that list, for who is so absurd (say ye) that will not pray to him that is almighty, and pay that due homage unto him who is the *Creator of the ends of the earth*.

Unto such atheists as these I shal propose these four things which if you be not able to give a positive answer unto, be perswaded that ye never knew what it is to pray unto God, so as to have your offerings coming up with acceptance upon his holy Altar.

1. Did ye ever know what it was to go to prayer upon an internal principle of love and the grace of Christ con-

constraining you? are there not many of you, O atheists, who do not know what this means to have the precious bonds of love constraining & imposing a blessed necessity upon your hearts to converse with God in prayer? did ye ever know what it was to bind your *sacrifice to the horns of the altar* by the cords of love?

2. Did ye ever know what it was by prayer, to attain to more conformity with God, and to crucifie your lusts? there are many, & I may say some professors to whom this is a mystery through fasting and prayer to crucifie an idol or lust. It were good ye had a holy jealousie over your selves, that you are in *bonds of iniquity, and gall of bitterneſſe*. The most part of our mortification is rather by consent then by constraint; our idols doth rather go out: nor are cast out, or else our idols dieth rather to us then we die to them, hence it is that, oftentimes after he hath famished our gods, we sit down and bemoan our selves over the graves of our idols, and as *David* lamented over *Absolom*, so do we over our lusts.

3. Did ye ever know what it was to distinguish betwixt absence and presence? When did ye meet with such a place which ye might call *Penuel*, that you had seen God face to face? and in another place you might have said, *Here he did turn about the face of his Throne, and did vail himself with a cloud*, so that I know not where to find him.

4. I shal in the last place propose this question which I conceive may not only convince prophane Atheists, but also some who have a shew of Religion: Did you ever know what it was to sit down and lament over absence from Christ, and think it an importable want? Oh, where is the exercise of the impatient grace of love now gone? O, but Christ may live long in heaven, before the most part of us give him a visit; I fear he visit us, before we visit him.

And now, O Atheists, examine your selves by these and be perswaded that if ye know not what these things mean ye are yet strangers unto the spiritual exercise of this duty of prayer and all your prayers that ever ye have spoken, have been but *as smoak in his nostrils, and a fire that burneth all the day.* Believe me in this, O men of the world, that in the day when ye shal solemnly appear before God in the *valley of decision*, this shal be a great Item of your ditty that you have prayed so much, or rather that you have prophaned his Holiness (which you pretend to love) so much. O that all of us were not *almost but altogether perswaded to be Christians.* Seeing Christ doth offer that precious dignity to make us not only *sons in law to a King which ought not to seem small in our eyes*; but also to make us *Kings and Priests unto God*, can we refuse such an offer as this? Might he not summond the heavens and the earth, and angels, and our brethren who are now above to behold a wonder? yea and do doubt, it is a wonder that any of us should slight such an offer.

Now if any of you would ask at me that question what is and should be the native exercise of a Christian while he is here below in the land of his exile, & a stranger from his fathers house? Whether he should exercise himself in singing or in praying? We answer that prayer is, and should be the main exercise of a christian, while he is here below in the land of his exile and is a stranger from his fathers house, when the promises are not yet accõplished nor al the propheties fulfilled, we confess, the exercise of joy and rejoyceing in God, ought to be a necessary duty and exercise of a christian; we may sing the songs of these excellent Musicians, and heavenly Harpers, *that stands upon the*

the Sea of glass having harps in their hands. And our songs which is here below, is only different in degrees their songs are of a higher key, and our songs are of a lower key, though we confesse they are more expert in that divine art, for we oftentimes spill our songs in the singing of them: as likewise they are more constant in that blessed exercise, but alace, we are oftentimes constrained to hang our harps on *the willow trees, while we sit by theſe rivers of Babel.* But if we would praise more, we should pray more, and if we did pray more, we should praise more. O! but prayer would furnish us matter of new songs every day and if we were much in that exercise, we might have that blessed Psalm to sing, *He hath put a new song into my mouth, even praise unto the Lord.* I think a Christian may examine himself by this unerring rule of his growth in grace, he may know it by the exercise of secret prayer: this is the pulse of a Christian, by which he may know his constitution: and the slow beatings of the pulse of the Christians of this generation, doth prove this unto us, that grace is in a remarkable decay; it is groaning within us, *as the groans of a wounded man.* O, but if we were more obedient unto this precious commaud, *pray without ceasing,* our grace might be more vigorous *and our bed might be green*, and we might be *bringing forth fruit even in our old age.*

But now to that which we shal insist mainly upon in going through this duty and grace of prayer (beside theſe things that we spake at the last occasion) *viz.* what are theſe strong impediments and obstructions that doth imped and hinder a christians access unto God in his secret retirements in prayer? If we were asked at, when did we last behold him? We may say that which *Esther* spake to the servants of *Morde-*

Mordecay; it is thirty daye since I did behold the Kings face. But alace, our lot of lamentation and defection from God, may ascend to a higher pitch; yea, it is many thirty dayes since we did behold the King. O, but we are great strangers in heaven, & though we should be eternally so, we could not debate with his Justice.

The first impediment that obstructs a Christians liberty in having access to God in his secret devotions, is that woful and carnal design which he doth propose to himself in the exercise of that duty: we are low in our designs, which makes us low in our enjoyments, this is clear, *James* 4. 3. where this is given as a reason why we do not receive that which we pray for, *We ask amiss, to spend it upon our lusts.* We pray in secret that we may be more fitted to pray when we go abroad, & thereby get applause: hence it is that so much of christians pursuits are rather taken up in seeking after the ornaments of prayer, then after the grace of prayer; rather to pursue after these things that are adorning in it, then these things that are saving in it, & even oftentimes the ministers of the Gospel have that woful end proposed to themselves. How oftentimes do our hearts speak that which *Saul* said to *Samuel*, *Honour me this day before the people and Elders of Israel*, And I think this is an evil which Christians may easily discern and take up, whether or not they do propose themselves as the last and ultimate end of all their devotions? And one that hath this woful qualification, he doth resent & grieve more for his publick straitnings and bonds, then for these which he hath in private. Are there not many of us here who will rise up from secret prayer under the undeniable cōviction of much distance from God, and yet never know what it is to have an anxious thoght about it? O, when did absence from Christ in our secret retirements, make us *forget to eat our bread*

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Ah, that ſickneſs of love, whether is it gone? we are ſick unto death of imaginary health; and we wiſh that that ſickneſſe of love were more epidemick and univerſal in thoſe dayes, which were not a ſickneſs unto death, *but for the glory of God.* And in our publick ſtraitnings, when we converſe one with another, how much will we grieve and repine, though we confeſs theſe are rather the grievings of our pride, then of our love: rather lamentation, becauſe of the loſſe of our reputations, then becauſe of the loſs of our abſence with Chriſt? One that hath this woful qualification of propoſing themſelves as the end of their devotions, they may likewiſe know it by this, that when they are ſtraitned in their publick aproaches to God, and when others are enlarged, they envy and fret; they are rather indued with envy, then a holy emulation; which proveth unto us, that we are not great in the Kingdom of heaven, becauſe we are not much taken up to glorifie God, which hath given ſuch gifts to men: but we ſit down at his wiſe and wonderful diſpenſation, *that he hath given unto others five talents, and to us but one*; ſo that oftentimes we are provoked to that impious courſe, as *to bind up one talent in a napkin, and to dig in the earth, and hide our Lords money* Studying by that practice to appropriate the eſtimation of humility unto our ſelves, when we cannot get the eſtimation of one that is eminent in parts and abilities, which doth oftentimes provoke God to take that from us that we ſeem to have, *and to give to him that hath more, ſo that he may have abundance.* One that hath this woful end, himſelf, as the end of all his devotions; may likewiſe know it by this, that ſeldom or never doth he go about that exercise of prayer from a principle of love, or delight to walk with God, but to attain the expreſſions of pray-

er, hence it is, when most part of Christians come abroad, they do rather prove themselves Orators, then Christians, the voice of words is more heard, then the voice of the affections, and these inexpressable sighs and groans of the spirit.

Ah! the real and spiritual exercise of that duty, it is far gone into decay, There is not one amongst a thousand that doth study earnestly after it. Think ye to pursue and win God by your fair blosoms and flourishing Rhetorick, gallantnesse and fineness of expressions? Will not he who is infinite in understanding, laugh at your folly? Are ye to perswade a man? Are ye not rather to perswade God? Ye may likewise know it by this, whether or not ye propose your selves at the last and ultimate end of all your devotions, and it is when ye have most enlargements and access unto God in your secret retirements, and ye desire and covet to have manyest spectators and auditors, that so they may passe that testimony on you, that *ye are men greatly beloved of God*, that doth receive such singular testimonies of his love, and of his respects: but wo be unto you that are such hypocrits, *who covet the greetings in the markets and the uppermost rooms at feasts, desiring to be called of men Rabbi: Verily, ye shal have your reward; Whom he that is first shal be last, and he that is last shal be first.* When that proverb shal be taken up over you; *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer son of the morning*, when satan by his tail shal draw glistring stars down out of heaven towards the earth, and we think, this woful evil of proposing our selves as the end of our devotions, doth not only obstruct this grace, but likewise when we attain to it in some measure, it breaks it off.

It is certain that when a Christian hath most

nearneſſe with God, and is in a manner, liſted up to the third heavens, then he doth receive great liberty of expreſſions, winning to ſome high and eminent conceptions of God, and ſome ſignificant expreſſions of his own miſery, then our pride cauſing us to reflect upon what we have ſpoken, do much quench our holy flame of zeal and love: we ſtudy to have expreſſions in our memory, that we may expreſſe them when we come abroad, rather then affections in the heart: and this hath obſtructed many Chriſtians of precious enjoyments, and doth prove this eminently to you, that ye are more taken up with the expreſſions of your enjoyments, then with the enjoyments of themſelves. We confeſs there are ſome who are more rude and groſſe in their carriage, who go about this exerciſe of prayer, that they may take advantage to ſin with more liberty, and with fewer challenges; like that adulterous woman mentioned in *Prover.* 7. 14. 18. who after that ſhe ſaid, ſhe had peace offerings with her & that ſhe had payed her vowes, ſhe inferreth this, *That ſhe would go and take her fill of loves, and ſolace her ſelf to the morning.* Your prayers, O Athieſts are alwayes an abomination in the ſight of the Lord. O how much more, when ye bring them with ſuch a wicked mind! How will you hide your ſins with ſuch a covering. O take heed to your ſpirits, leſt ye deal treacherouſly with God. There are many of us that prayes like Saints, but we walk like devils. Surely one that heard us pray, might propheſie good things of us, but in our life may find our propheſies fail in the accompliſhment.

There is a ſecond *impediment* that obſtructs a Chriſtians liberty in the exerciſe of prayer in his ſecret retirements, which is that woful formality and indifferency of ſpirit that we uſe in the exer-

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exercise of our secret prayers, the most part of us are ignorant what it is to *cry mightily to God* when we are alone and to *wrestle with him were it untill the dawning of the day till he bless us, that so we may indeed be Princes with God*; that by these two hands we may lay hold on him, Faith and Love, Love lays hold on the heart of Christ, and Faith lays hold on his Word and by it detains him in his galleries. I may speak this to the shame of many of you, that it were your advantage to be as serious in speaking to God when ye are alone, as ye are serious when ye are in company. A heathen did observe this, and therefore did press it upon all to whom he wrote, that they should beware of woful indifferency: And we confess this woful indifferency of ours, is but an involving our selves in that curse. *Cursed be the man that hath in his flock a male, and voweth & sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing.* O what if precious Christ should propose that unanswerable challenge to many of us who are here, *Are the consolations of God small to you?* Or is there any secret thing with you, that ye do so little pursue after these things? We confesse, our formality and woful indifferency, doth much proceed either from the want of a solide impression of a deity before whom we pray, or else from the want of a spiritual conviction of the absolute necessity of these things that we pray for. Ye formalists, whose constant practice is to be formal, by your formality ye make your bonds stronger upon your spirits, and do wreath the yoke of your transgressions round about your necks. These impertinent rovings of spirit that we have in the exercise of prayer, doth no doubt; come from this fountain of woful formality that we have in it, *Fowls do with liberty descend upon the carcasses*, when we are formal and it is only fervency that must *drive these away*.

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The third impediment that obstructs a Christians liberty ; we are not much taken up in imploying of the holy Ghost that must help our infirmities , and must breath upon our withered spirits, otherwise such dead bones as we are cannot live; *Our bodily exercise profiteth little, it is the spirit that quickneth,* as is clear Joh 3.5. and certainly except *the north or south wind blow our spices cannot flow out* : *and except the Angel move the water, we cannot step in and be healed.* O but that word is a mystery to our practice which is in the 20. *ver.* of the Epist *Jude*, and surely, we may be (astonished when we read it over & we may be ashamed that we are so little in the real practice of it) where this is put in amongst the midst of all the Christians duties , that we should *pray in the holy Ghost* : and certainly that duty, is required of us, although it be a mystery and an unknown thing to the practice of the most part of the Christians of this generation. I think a Christian that is much in the imployment of the holy Ghost, when he goeth to pray , he is put to an holy *non plus*, so that he knoweth not what he shal say and is oftimes put without any complement to propose that desire to God? *Lord teach us what we shal say, for we cannot order our speech before thee, by reason of our darkness.* Think ye not that *Peter, James.* and *John* had the spirit of prayer eminently above us all , and yet they were not ashamed to propose that desire to God. *Lord teach us to pray* ? It were for your contentment and advantage, to pray even as though ye had never prayed before. I am perswaded of it, that if this exercise of prayer were so gone about , we should have much more liberty of words, and of expressions then we have ; it is certain we must have no confidence in our gifts and abilities of prayer. The

prayers

prayers that are penned in heaven, are best heard in heaven. That which the holy Ghost doth dite (with reverence be it spoken) the Father can best read. The Father can read no characters of any petition (to admit it) but that which his blessed hands doth pen.

There is this fourth impediment and obstruction which obstructs a Christians liberty and access to God in his secret retirements and prayers. That we are so little taken up in the imploying of Jesus Christ as a Mediator in our approaches unto God, I think it is impossible for a christian to delight and enjoy himself with God, but through Jesus Christ, who is *that vision of peace.* O Christians, through what door will ye enter into the *Holiest of all*, if ye enter not throgh him, even through Jesus Christ, the vail of his flesh? in a manner, he is the door of heaven & we must enter into heaven through the door. Christ is that great Courtior in heaven, by whom we must have access and permission unto the King. If any person dare adventure to go to pray without him (*who is that blessed dayes-man betwixt God and sinners*) he comes without his wedding garment, and so that question shal be proposed to him; *Friend how camest thou hither?* Or rather, *O enemy how camest thou hither without a wedding garment?* And be perswaded of it, that ye shal remain speechless, not opening your mouth.

The fifth impediment and obstruction which obstructs a Christians liberty and access to God in his secret retirements, is the woful entanglements and ingagements of heart that we have to the impertinent vanities and trifles that we have of this passing world; our hearts are mightily taken up with the perishing and decaying things that are in this life; yea the most part of our hearts are married

to the world, and to the things thereof; and we think, and are perswaded of it, that that doth exceedingly obstruct and mar our liberty and access to God. This Divinity was well known to godly *David*, *Psal.* 66. 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear my prayer*, hearing and access, although they be not much different, yet always the last presupposeth the first: and this Divinity was also well known unto that blessed man that is spoken of in *John* 9. 31. *And this we know, that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, & obeyeth his will, him he heareth*, I think those woful and dreadful evils that doth so easily beset us, doth exceedingly hinder and obstruct us to ascend in a spiritual cloud of divine and holy affection unto God; the souls of the most part of us are divided amongst many even amongst so many lovers, that it cannot devot and resign it self to God; every impertinent idol and lust doth claim a right and relation unto the soul, and then that obstructs a Christians liberty in his secret retirements. O to be more in the exercise of this precious and excellent grace of faith, whereby we may purify our selves from *all uncleanness of the flesh, and of the spirit, and may be able to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord.* O can it be that such a fountain, that such a defiled & corrupt fountain that sends forth only salt water, & can send forth any sweet, precious, and soul-refreshing springs of living water? This was a mystery and a paradox unto the apostle *James* in his chap. 3. 12. *Can fig-trees bear olive berries? Or can an olive tree bear figs? so can no fountain yeeld salt water and fresh*, and certainly it shal always remain impossible for us to do both good and evil. Would ye know the livery which the Church of Christ must have, and her members? It is to be cloathed

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with holineſſe; for, no doubt, that is the robe and garment with which we muſt enter into the Holieſt of all: and may not that incite and provoke your deſires to follow after it which is ſo excellent and precious? Believe it, we are not able to tell the worth of it,

There is this ſixth impediment which obſtructs a Chriſtians liberty and acceſs to God in his ſecret prayer, and it is that woful reſiſting and quenching of the motions of the ſpirit, that oftentimes we fall into: hence it is, that when a Chriſtian doth go unto God, he is debarred, and his prayers is ſhut out from God; & the reaſon of it is, becauſe he debarred God before: And this is remarkably clear from the Brides practice, *Cant.* 5. 2. compared with the following verſes, ſhe held Chriſt at the door, notwithſtanding his *locks were wet with the dew of the night, and his hair with the drops of the morning.* But when ſhe had condeſcended to open to him, he had withdrawn himſelf from her. O who would hold out ſuch a precious gueſt? Surely it were more ſuitable exercile for us, that we ſhould admire and wonder and ſtand aſtoniſhed at his low condeſcenſion, that ever he ſhould have condeſcended ſo low as to come unto us, rather then to require that marvellous and unſearchable grace of his towards us, after ſuch a way as many of us ſo ſinfully do.

There is this laſt impediment that hinders chriſtians liberty and acceſs to God in his ſecret prayers and it is that woful evil of pride wherewith we are cloathed ſo much in our approaches to God, we ought *to bow our head ſeven times towards the ground*, when we begin to make our approaches unto him, even unto him who is greater then all the kings of the earth: believe it, if the grace of humility were more our exercise

cise in secret prayer, certainly we should enjoy more of him then we do. This is clear in 1 *Pet.* 5. 5. 6. where he saith: *God giveth grace to the humble, but he resisteth the proud.* And it is likewise clear from *Isa.* 57. 15. though he be that high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, & whose Name is holy, yet he saith, I *dwel in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a humble and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones:* And although he be that high and holy One, he loveth one that is of a pure and contrite spirit. O, might we not alwayes say, that we are not worthy that thou should even condescend so far *as to come under our roof?* Modesty & Reverence might make us admire such wonderful & precious visits; *Whence is it*, saith *Elizabeth*, *that the mother of my Lord should come to me?* Much more may we say, whence is it that our Lord himself should come to us? We may challenge our selves, that our enjoyments of God are not more then they are.

Now we shal speak, secondly, a little to you (before we shut up our discourse) how a Christian may be helped after his enjoyments in prayer (and after he hath been admitted to taste of *thes pure river thes flows out from beneath the throne of God*) to rest in his love to Christ, & not to stir him up nor awake him, before he please. We confess, it is as much difficulty (if not more) to maintain cõmunion with God, when it is gained, as to gain it when it is lost. Oh, but Satan hath oftentimes catched much advantage over the people of God after their enlargements. When was it that *John* fell down to worship the angel? was it not when he had *seen the Bride, the Lambs wife adorned?* as is clear *Rev.* 19. 10. compared with the preceeding verses: and it is clear again from *Johns* practice,

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Rev. 22.9. compared with the fore going words; and when was it that the disciples did rove, not knowing what they spake: was it not when they were on mount *Tabor*, and did see the fashion of his face change before him? *Matth.* 17. 2. 4. 6. Though we confess we must give an indulgence unto that, it was nothing but the rovings of holy love that made them to do so, which, alace, is not much heard in those dayes; we rove in a more impertinent manner. And we think a christian after his enjoyments and enlargements, ought especially to stand on his watch, and to *pray, lest he enter unto temptation*: for the stroak that he doth receive after enjoyments and enlargements is one of the most discouraging stroaks, and most anxious that he meeteth with; it hath been the occasion of much misbelief, and hath made his owne to mourn not only over the fonadation, but also even to raze it down; arguing thus with themselves, if that when Christ was presented with them, upon whom their strength was laid, they were led captive unto their lusts, *Rom.* 7. 23. how much more shal they be led captive with them when Christ shal be absent and away; they have been put to draw that conclusion, *One day shal I fall by the hand of some of mine enemies*. We should guard against such a stroak, because it doth alwayes almost make the christian call in question the reality of his enjoyments. It is hard for a Christian to receive a stroak by the hand of his iniquities after enlargements, and not presently to call in question the reality of them; yea more to cal in question his estate in grace, for they do often debate with themselves: *if it had been he who visited me, would he not have enabled me to sing a new song of triumph over my lusts*? And also ye would guard against it, be-

because it is one of the most dishonourable indignities and affronts that can be put on precious Christ: and if there were no more to provoke you to guard against it, may it not be sufficient unto you that, that break which ye have received by your iniquities after your enlargements and enjoyments of God, if it be by your own consent (believe it, and be perswaded of it) that in a manner, it saith this much unto you, that ye have preferred an idol and lust even to Jesus Christ? We think the Jews preferring *Barrabas* before Christ, when the crown of thorns was upon his head, and when he was spitted upon and buffeted, it is not such an undignity and disgrace that ye put upon him, when ye prefer your lusts and idols unto him, even when he is appearing with a crown of glory and majesty unto you, and a rob of righteousnesse and of joy? O dare ye even in his presence prefer any thing before him? Might not Angels, and the souls of just men made now perfect, & all that are round about the Throne, might not they all take up that lamentation over you, *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise.* And we think there are these three woful evils that readily befals a Christian after enlargements and enjoyments that he meets with.

There is this first evil of security, *Can.* 5. 2. compared with the first verse, where Christ when he was come into his garden, *and had gathered his myrrhe with his spices, and had eaten his hony comb with his hony, and had drunken his wine with his milk*; And yet for all these enjoyments the Spouse was sleeping: As likewise in *Zech.* 4. 1. compared with the preceeding chapter, where the Prophet fell asleep after his enjoyments *untill the Angel came and awaked him.*

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An we readily, sleep in the bed of love! and that hath impeded many excellent visits we might have. O what a visit was that of the Spouse, *Cant.* 5. 2. we may question whether ever she got such an one while she was here below.

And secondly, that woful evil of pride, as is certainly presupposed in 2 *Cor.* 12. 7. where lest *Paul should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of revelations, there is a messenger of Satan sent to buffet him.* O, but it is a dangerous exercise for a Christian to search his own glory. We confess we do not search to strengthen our own confidence, or our love; but to add oyl to that fire of pride in our reflections upon our selves: *The wind doth lift us upon its wings, and we ride upon it till our substance be dissolved.*

And there is that third *evil* which is not so *obvious*, but, no doubt, doth oftentime, befall the Christian, and that is self love, which oftentimes he falleth into after his enjoyments, and this evil certainly doth break off many of our enjoyments, to the disadvantage of the Christian, and hinders him to exercise himself in the grace of true love, which alwayes we ought to be keeping in exercise, because it is that oyl by which our chariot-wheels most move swifter, and be as the *chariots of Amminadab.*

Now for that which we proposed, viz. how a Christian may be helped to keep his enjoyments which he hath attained to by prayer? We shall only propose these two things: 1. Be much in the exercise of watchfulness after your enlargements, *that ye enter not into temptation.* And 2. be much in the exercise of humility, that when grace lifts you up, you may not lift your selves. O but a Christian that walketh alwayes with his feet towards the earth, and doth never

mount an hand bread above it, he walketh most safely. I know nothing to keep your enjoyments of life, & to keep you from snares in your enjoyments so much, as the grace of humilitie: but we cannot stay long in telling you how he shal maintain your enjoyments; there, are alace, so few of them in these dayes: When were ye in Heaven? or when was Heaven brought down to you, in a manner. If the most part of us did now behold Christ, we would not know him, it is so long since we saw him. O precious Christ, how much is he undervalued in these dayes? I think if such a supposition as this were possible, that if Christ would go down to the pit to those damned persons that are reserved in everlasting chains, and preach that doctrine unto them, *Love am I, receive me, and ye shal obtain life*, we question whether obedience or admiration would be more their exercise: Would they not bind that command as a chain of gold about their neck? But now it, ye that refuse him now, ere long he shal refuse you. Oh, when shal that precious promise that is in *Zech.* 8, 21. be accomplished, *And the inhabitants of one city shal go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of Hosts: I will go also?* Or as the word may be rendred, *continually*. O! when shal such a voice be heard in this City of *Glasgow*? Seeing our brethren above sing without ceasing, let us *pray without ceasing*: And to you that prayes, I shal say this word, ye that fervently pray without ceasing, it is not long before ye shal sing without ceasing, and without all interruption.

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SERMON III.

1. Thes. 5. 17. *Pray without ceasing.*

REal godliness is so entire and undivided a thing and the parts of it are so inseparably knit, and linked one with another and cannot be parted, that it is like *Christs coat that was without seam, that it could not be divided*; and except the whole fall to us by divine lot we can have no part nor portion in it; and were this more solidly believed & imprinted upon our hearts; the inseparable connexion and near cognition that is amongst all the graces of the Spirit; we should not be so partial and divided in our pursuits after them, *separating those things which he hath joyned together*; which oftentimes is the occasion that our nakedness and deformity doth appear: neither should we (if this were believed) be so soon satisfied with our attainments; (but in a maner) should be entertaining an holy oblivion & forgetfulness of all that we have purchased & put by our hand, and should be *passing forward to these things that are before, till once we attain to that stature of one in Christ*. And till grace have its perfect work, & want nothing, we can never be constant. Amongst all the graces of the spirit which a christian ought vigorously to pursue after, this grace of prayer is not amongst the least: it is that which keepeth all the graces of a Christian in life and vigor, *and maketh us fat and flourishing, and bringing forth fruit in our old age*: and except the Christian be planted by that wall, his branches will never climb over the wall who is the christian that groweth like *a palm tree and doth flourish as the cedar in Lebanon*? Is not he that is planted

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the house of the Lord which is a house of prayer.
And we conceive that the fundamental cause why grace & the real exercise of godliness is under such a woful and remarkable a decay in these dayes, it is want of obedience unto this great commandment; *Pray without ceasing.* Were we dwelling *fourtie dayes in the mount with God, our faces should shine, and we should be constrained to cast a vail over them.* Were we entertaining a holy and divine correspondency with heaven by this messenger of prayer, we might be tasting of the first fruits of the land afar off. Prayer is one of those faithful messengers and spyes which a Christian sends forth to view the promised land, and which alwayes doth bring up a good report upon that excellent and glorious land. O when went ye to the brook *Eschol* by the exercise of prayer, and did cut down a branch with a cluster of grapes and were admitted to behold the land, which is the glory of all lands; in the midst of which doth grow that *tree of life which bears twelve manner of fruits every year*? O what a land suppose you it to be, wherein are twelve harvests every year? Alace, we are straitned in our desires, which makes us straitned in our enjoyments. May not we blush and be ashamed that the men of the world should enlarge their desires, as hell and as death, and shal cry, *Give, give,* after these passing and transient vanities of the world, and that Christians should not be provoked to enlarge their desires as heaven, and as *the sand by the sea shore,* after these things that are more high and divine in their nature, and are more fruitful and advantageous in their enjoyment? we think ignorance is the cause of our slow pursuit after these things, and ignorance in men of the world is the occasion of their swift and vigorous pur-

suit after these endless and passing vanities of this vain and transient world.

We did at the last occasion (speaking upon these words (spake somewhat to that which doth obstruct a christians liberty in his secret retirements and conversing with God, so that the door of accesse is oftentimes shut upon him, & he hath not the dignity conferred upon him to enter into the *Holiest of all*.

We speak likewise to that which was the best and most compendious way to maintain fellowship and communion with God after once it is attained, that when our hearts are enlarged, we may keep our spirits, in a tender and spiritual frame, we shal now in the next place speak a little to you, how a Christian may be helped to know the reality of his enjoyments, whether they be delusions, yea, or not; or tokens and significations of the Lords special & singular respect: and before we speak of that, we shal premise these two things:

First, that a man which hath but a common work of the spirit, and hath never been indued with real & saving Grace, he may attain to many flashes of the spirit and some tastings *of the powers of the world to come*, as likewise to the receiving of the word of the Gospel with joy, as is clear from *Heb.* 6. 5. and *Matth.* 13. 20. He may have many things that looks like the most Heavenly and Spiritual enjoyments of a christian, but we conceive that the enjoyments of these that have but a common work of the spirit, they are not of such a measure and degree, as the enjoyments of the sincere christian, hence they are called in *Heb* 6, 5. but a tasting, the word is sometimes used for such a tasting so when one goeth to a merchant to buy liquor, he doth receive somewhat to taste to teach him to buy, but that is far from the word which is in *Ps.* 36. 8. they

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shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house: and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures, And from the word which is in, *Cant.* 5.1. *Eat and drink abundantly, O beloved*, we conceive likewise that their enlargements and enjoyments which they have, the strength and vigor of their corruptions are not much abated thereby, neither is conformity with God attained: hence is that word, *Mat.* 13.20. Though they received the word with joy; yet the thorns (which we do understand to be corruptions) they do grow without any opposition; & that never knew what it was to have the strength and vigor of their lusts abated by their enjoyments, they have but common work of the spirit. The Hypocrites enlargements are rather in publick, and in their conversings one with another, then in their secret retirements: and those enjoyments that they have when they converse one with another, they do rather joy and rejoice because of applause that they have by such enlargements and of a reputation of having familiarity and intimateness with God, rather then for the enjoyments themselves; and that dignity and honour hath been conferred upon them to taste somewhat of that River that flowes from beneath the throne of God, we conceive likewise that in all their enjoyments that they have, they do not much study and endeavor to guard against all obstructions & impediments that may stir up Christ, and awake him before he please; they can give their hearts a latitude to rove abroad after impertinent vanities, yea presently after the seeming access and communion with God, is likewise their desires to the exercise of prayer, and christian duties is not much increased by these enlargements which they receive being strangers to that word which is in *Pro.* 10. 29. *The way of the Lord is strength to the upright*, &c.

That which secondly we shal speak of, (before we come to speak how a Christian may be helped to know the reality of his enjoyments) is this, that there is an enlargement of gifts, which is far from the enlargement of the spirit and of grace. There may be much liberty of words and of expressions where there is not much liberty of affections. We think that it is a frequent delusion amongst his own, that they conceive their liberty of their expressing themselves in prayer, is enlargement: but we are perswaded of this, that there may be much of this, and not much of the spirit and of the grace of prayer (as we told before) The spirit of prayer is sometimes an impediment to words, so that a Christian which hath much of that, may have least of volubility and of expressions.

But first, (these enjoyments that are real) which indeed are significations of his love and respect to you, they do exceedingly move and humble the Christian, and causeth him to walk low in his own estimation. Hence is that word in 2 Sam. 7. 18, 19. where David being under such a load of love, that (in a manner) he is forced to sit down and cannot stand; He doth subjoin that expression, *Who am I, O Lord? and what is my house that thou hast brought me hitherto?* and also in Job 42. 5. 6. where that enjoyment which Job had of God, *as to see him with the seeing of the eye* (a sight not frequent in those dayes) He subjoins a strange inference from so divine premisses, *Therefore, I abhorr my self in dust and ashes*, and in Isa. 6. 5. compared with the preceeding verses, where *Isaiah* from that clear discovery of God; as to see him in his Temple, he is constrained to cry forth, *Woe is me, I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips.* It were our advantage that when we are lifted up

up to the third heavens, were it to hear words that are unspeakable, yet to cover our upper lip, and cry, *Unclean, unclean*; we ought alwayes to sit nearer the dust, the more that grace doth exalt us to heaven: and we conceive that it is a most excellent way to keep our selves in life after our enjoyments, to be walking humbly with God, and to know that the root beareth us, and not we the root, christians enlargements that are real, hath this effect upon them, it doth provoke to a more constant exercise of pursuing after God; their diligence is enlarged when they are enlarged: hence is that word, *Psal.* 116. 2. *Because God hath inclined his heart unto me* (which presupposeth access) *therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.* It is certain, that if our enjoyments be real, they will be well improven, for this is a sweet fruit which doth alwayes accompany them.

2. Ye may likewise know the reality of your enjoyments by your endeavors to remove all impediments and obstructions that may interrupt your fellowship and correspondence with God according to that word, *Cant.* 3. 5. when after the church did behold him who had been so long absent, she is put to this, *I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up nor awake my beloved till he please.* I conceive this is one of the most certain demonstrations of the reality of enjoyments, when you are to put more carefulness and solicitude to have all things taken out of the way that may provoke him to go away and quench his holy Spirit. O! but it is a marvelous undervaluing of the grace of Jesus Christ to take such a latitude to our selves after we have been enlarged.

3. Ye may likewise know the reality of your enjoyments, by this, when ye do attain conformity with

God by our enjoyments: hence is that word, 2 Cor. 18. *Whom beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lo were changed unto the same image from glory to gl even as by the spirit of the Lord.* Our corruptions m be abated, if we would prove the reality of our e joyments: for if we give them that compleat latit which they have had before, we have reason to suspicious and jealous of our selves: and we s say this, do not rest upon all your enjoyments t ye have here within time, as satisfactory, but let th rather provoke your appetit, then suffice your de and longings. That holy man *David* knew of beginning of satisfaction but when eternity sho come; according to that word, *Psal.* 17. 15. *Wh Lawake* (that is, in the blessed morning of the surrection) *then I shal be satisfied with thy likene* Did *David* never find satisfaction here below? that he did receive, was but the streams that flow from that immense and profound fountain sea of love; He did drink but of the brook, wh he was here below; but when he was above, he w drowned in that immense sea of love, and there abundantly satisfied. O let the streams lead you the fountain; and when ye are win there, ye m sit down and pen your songs of everlasting pra these are but of the *the valley of Achor, which mus a door of hope*, to have more entire and full enjoym of him.

That which thirdly we shal speak to, shal be those advantages which a Christian may have by exercise of prayer, we may say this unto you, *Co and see*, can best resolve the question; for those s ritual advantages which a Christian may have in real & spiritual discharge of this duty they are be felt not told. *It* is impossible sometimes for a

tion, to make language of these precious and excellent things that he meets with in sincere and serious prayer?

The first advantage, It doth keep all the graces of the spirit eminently in exercise it maketh them vigorous and green: it keeps the grace of love most lively for one that is much in the exercise of prayer, he doth receive so many notable discoveries and manifestations of the sweetness & glory of God, & most rich participations of that unspeakable delight which is to be found in him, that he is constrained to cry forth, *Who would not love him who is the King of Saints?* O, when met ye with such an enjoyment of God in prayer, as this? Did ye conceive, that ye were cloathed with an impossibility to love him too much? Or to love him as he ought to be loved? And when did ye conceive that it was an absurd opinion, that he could be loved too much? Hence these two are conjoyned together *Rejoice evermore*, and *pray without ceasing*. And what is joy, but a fruit of love, or rather an immense measure of love? We confess, it is a question that is difficult to determine whether prayer or faith doth keep love most in exercise? We think love (whose foundation is upon sense) is most kept in exercise by prayer: hence it is when we are straitned in the exercise of that duty, and when he turns *about the face of his Throne*, then love begins to languish and decay, and then that excellent grace of faith doth step in and speak thus to love: *Wait on God, for I shal yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.* Faith can read love in his heart when sense cannot read love in his hands nor in his face: but when he seemeth to frown, or to strike, faith can make such a noble exposition on such a dispensation: *I know the thoughts of his heart, they are*

thoughts of peace, and not of war, to give me an ex
pected end.

Prayer doth likewise keep the grace of mortifica
on eminently in exercise: Would ye know what
the reason that our corruptions do sing so m
songs of triumph over us, & are so much led capti
by them according to their will? Is it not the w
of the exercise of secret prayer, and that we are t
much taken up in the imploying of the Angel th
must bind the old Serpent, the Devil, as is mentio
ned, Rev. 20. 1, that hath the great chain on h
hand. Hence *Paul* when his corruptions were
wakned, and stirring within him, he knew no w
pon so suitable for them as *Prayer*, as is clear fro
2 Cor. 12. 7, 8. where the messenger of Satan w
sent to buffet him: it is said, *that he besought t
Lord thrice that this might depart from him.* And o
blessed Lord Jesus (speaking of the casting out
a devil) he saith, *Matth.* 17, 21. *This kind goe
not out, but by fasting and prayer.* It is no wond
that oftentimes we are led captive by our iniquiti
and our lusts and our corruptions mocking at o
profession and scorning such weak and feeble build
ers as we are, say to us, *Can such feeble Jews as th
are, build such stately and glorious buildings in o
day?* But ye who are much in this exercise of this du
and who to your own appehensions doth not recei
much victory over your lusts, which maketh y
oftentimes cry forth, *Is it in vain for me to seek t
Almighty, and what profit is there that I pray un
him?* (We confesse, the small successe that a Christi
hath, when he doth discharge this duty of prayer, do
sometimes constrain him to draw that conclusion,
will pray no more.) We think the small victory th
ye obtain over your lusts, and the little increase in t
wo

work of mortification, may proceed from the want of that divine fervency & holy fervour that we ought to have in your proposing your desires unto God, *the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much*, as *James* saith, *chap.* 5. 16. If we want fervency in our proposing our desires unto God, it is no wonder that we want successe; or likewise, it may proceed from our want of faith, our misbelief giving the return of our prayers before we begin to pray, & saying this unto us, *That though we call, he will not answer*: but as *James* saith, *chap* 5. 19. *The prayer of faith may save you who are sick*, & may raise you up, *for whatsoever ye ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive it*. And it doth sometimes proceed from the love and great respect that God hath to you, desiring that your wounds may be alwayes bleeding, that so ye may alwayes keep about his Throne. Is it not known that if our necessities were away, we should abridge & inch much of our secret devotion to God? In a manner, necessity is that chain whereby God binds the feet of his own to his Throne, he desireth not that they should be away, and therefore they halt so that they may rely on his strength to bear them.

Prayer doth likewise keep the grace of patience (under our most sad and crushing dispensations) eminently in exercise, would ye know the most compendious way to make you possess your souls in patience under great trouble? Then be much in the exercise of the grace of prayer; Hence is that word, *James* 5. 13. *If any man be afflicted let him pray*, &c. And what made *Paul* & *Silas* to sing in the prison, and so patiently to endure the crosse? was it not this, *They were praying at midnight*, *Acts* 16. 25. Certainly one that hath attained to much divine submission and holy enjoyment in the bea-

ing of their cross, they have been much in the exercise of prayer. Did ye never know (any of you) what such a thing as this meaned, that going to complain of your anxiety to God, you have been constrained to forget them, and begin to blesse and praise him, because he hath stopped the mouths of your complaints, and hath put a more divine and heavenly exercise in your hand? This the *Psalmist* did attain to in *Psal.* 89. where the scope of the Psalm will bear, that he was going to complain of the misery of the Church, and of himself, yet before ever he began to propone a complaint to God, he spent to the 38. v. in praising of him. Sometimes Christians have been constrained to cry forth, *It is better to be in the house of mourning, then in the house of mirth*: and to resolve not to fret *to be put in a fiery furnace, but seven times more then ordinary*: they have in the furnace *one like the Son of God to walk with them.*

Prayer, doth likewise keep the grace of Faith eminently in exercise. O! but Faith (which is one of the mysteries of the godliness) doth much languish & decay in us through the want of prayer! It is impossible for a Christian to believe except he be much in the exercise of prayer; we may maintain a vain hope and perswasion; but that spiritual exercise of Faith cannot be kept in life without that holy exercise of prayer: hence it is that prayer, when Faith is beginning to decay; doth go to God, and cry forth *Lord I believe, help my unbelief.* And we conceive there are these three grounds and golden pillars of Faith, on which it doth lean, which prayer doth oftentimes administer and give unto it. First, there is that golden foundation, *The faithfulness of God*, which prayer doth abundantly make evident to the Christian: hence when a Christian doth pray according

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ing to his promiſe, and doth receive a return of his prayer, he doth receive a demonſtration of the faithfulneſs of God, which is a pillar on which faith doth lean. Prayer doth likewiſe give unto Faith this ſecond pillar, which is the evidence and demonſtration of the goodneſs of God. O! but one that is much taken up in the exerciſe of the grace of prayer, what large & eminent diſcoveries of God doth he receive, he oftentimes diſappoints their fears, and overcomes their hopes and expectations: he doth not regulate our enjoyments according to our deſires: but he doth regulate them according to that divine and moſt bleſſed rule, his own good will & pleaſure, and, O bleſſed are we in this that it is ſo! And thirdly, Prayer doth likewiſe furniſh to Faith, experience, which is a pillar on which Faith muſt lean; that which maketh the Chriſtian have ſo ſmall experience, is want of the ſerious and conſtant exerciſe of prayer. O, but when he frowneth, he might have many things to ſupport our ſelves, if we were much in the ſerious exerciſe of this duty of prayer. And truly if we had theſe three pillars, our prayers would not return empty.

Now the ſecond advantage that a Chriſtian doth reap by the exerciſe of prayer, is, he is admitted by this duty to moſt intimate and familiar correſpondence with God. Did ye never know what it was to behold him who is inviſible in the exerciſe of this duty? Did ye ever know what theſe large & heavenly communications of his love doth mean? Prayer is that divine channel through which that river of conſolation (that *maketh glad the City of God*) doth run. When was it that *Cornelius* did ſee a man ſtanding in white apparel? was it not when he was praying, and when was it that *Daniel* did meet with the Angel a

was it not when he was in the exercise of prayer, and offering up his evening oblation to God? O for communion and fellowship with God (which is so rare and singular in these dayes) were the sweetnesse of it believed, we should be more frequent and constant in the pursuit of it. I confesse, and wonder that we are not put to debate oftentimes whether there be such a thing as communion and fellowship with him, we do so little enjoy it. What happiness (O beloved of the Lord, if so I dare call you) have ye, which doth so much satisfie you, that when your eternal happinesse is clearly holden forth before your face, yet ye do so much undervalue it? Surely this perswasion cometh not from him who hath called you. I think, if Angels and the souls of just men now made perfect (if I may so speak) if they were admitted to behold that wonderful undervaluing of communion and fellowship with God that is amongst the Christians of this generations; O how might they stand and wonder at us? They would think it a paradox and mystery, to behold any undervaluing of him who can never be overvalued. Would ye not blush and be ashamed, if he should imbrace you; ye that have so much undervalued him? I know no sin that a Christian shal be so much ashamed of, when he shal behold that *noble Plant of renown*, as the low and undervaluing conceptions and apprehensions that he hath had of him. If in heaven there were a latitude for us to pray, we would pray that prayer (when first our feet shal stand within the threshold of the door of our everlasting rest) *Pardon us for our undervaluing of thee, O precious Christ.*

The third advantage which a Christian hath in the exercise of prayer, is this, it is that duty by which

we must attain to the accomplishment of the promiser. Though God be most free in giving of the promises, yet he will be supplicated for the accomplishment of them; this is clear in *Ezech.* 36. 37. where in the preceeding words, there is named and holden forth large and precious promises, yet he subjoyneth, *Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them*, &c. This is likewise clear, 2 *Sam.* 7. 27. where *David* receiving the promise that his house should be established for ever, and that the Messiah should come out of his loins (according to the flesh) he maketh that sweet fruit of it: *Therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray his prayer unto thee.* Is not this a mystery to turn over your promises into prayers, and your prayers into songs of praises? It is no wonder that we oftentimes complain, *that his word doth fail for evermore*; because ye are not much in the exercise of that duty, which must bring the accomplishment of these things that he hath promised.

The fourth and last advantage that a Christian doth receive by the exercise of prayer, is the most compendious and excellent way to resist temptations that assault us. We speak before of mortifying of corruptions when once they have seised upon us, and that is a notable way to mortifie them by prayer: this is likewise an advantage, that when temptations begin to assault us, then we should go to our knees for relief; and I conceive, if a messenger of Satan were sent to buffet us, we might be constrained to *pray without ceasing*. Hence Jesus Christ who knew what was the best and most effectual remedy to resist temptations, he giveth this remedy of prayer, *Matth.* 26. 14. *Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation*:

Now

Now we shal shut up our discourse, by speaking a little to the last thing we intended to speak of at this occasion, and it is how a Christian may be helped to walk suteably, as he ought, under his spiritual bonds and straits. We confesse, it is one of the most hard and difficult tasks in Christianity, for a person to walk with divine submission under his publick bonds, that when God (in the depth of his unsearchable wisdome) hath thought fit to draw a vail over his face, to subscribe that truth, *He hath done all things well.* We confesse God hath these precious designs in such a dispensation, as that he may first hide pride from our eyes, and that we may be taught to walk humbly with him. O, but if we were alwayes enlarged in our publick converse one with another, how would we esteem of our selves above measure, and begin to undervalue these persons that are not thus kindly dealt with by God? Hence is it that he alwayes mixeth our wine with our water; he knoweth that the powring in of such precious liquor, these bruckle vessels of ours could not contain it.

He hath this design likewise in such a dispensation that we may be put to the sweet exercise of the grace of prayer; in a word, that we may be constant and serious in that duty. We conceive, if some liberty of words & enlargements in publick were granted us, we would abridge and come short in our private devotions. It is the great scope and main drift of some to seem great in the Kingdom of heaven amongst men though they be least in the estimation of Christ, who *is that faithful and true witnesse.*

And there is this design likewise in such a dispensation, and it is that we may be convinced of our folly and of the Atheism, and pride of our hearts, that we can rise up from secret prayer, and yet never have any

anxious

anxious thoughts about it; but in our publick straits and bonds, O how can we mourn and repine, and we confess, we think these repinings doth rather proceed from this, that we think that gaurd of worldly applause is now beginning to wither over us, and therefore we cry forth, *Is it better for us to die then live*, then from this; *Want of the presence of Jesus Christ, and the participation of his sweetness*; which we may most strongly convince you of by this, is it not sometimes so with you, that under your publick bonds when ye have been most remarkably straitned within your selves, yet if your hearts have not conceived evil of you but have testified their satisfaction, doth not your sorrow then decay, and there is no more repining thereat?

Now we think the best and most compendious way for a christian to bear such a dispensation (as to attain to a divine submission to Christ in all things, & to leave our complaints upon our selves) is this: We should study much the vanity of our popular applause, what an empty and transient a thing it is. I confesse I would wish no greater misery to any then to seek and to have it. We think it is misery enough to have it; but certainly they walk safest and most secureſt that cares not for it. Hence a Heathen said well to this purpose, *Qui bene latuit bene vixit*: *He that lurks well, lives well*, I would likewise have you much taken up in the consideration how ye have great disadvantage by your repinings & murmurings which ye have against his dispensations, in straining you in publick. O Christians, doth not your repinings incapacitate and indispose you for the going about the exercise of secret prayer? Doth not your repinings under your publick bonds, make your bonds strong upon your spirits? I confesse a Christian may con-

contract and draw on more fetters and bonds by
hours repining against such dispensations, then
able to shake off for many dayes: and when ye are
pining against such dispensations, that ye have
with, doth not your lusts and corruptions stir and
wake within you? Surely they then prevail, as we
say, *nullo contradicente*, nothing standing in oppo-
tion against them to our apprehension.

We would also say this to you, that ye may attain
to a divine and holy submission to such a dispensati-
on as this, ye would be much in the consideration
from what fountain your repinings and murmurings
doth proceed, what is the rise and original of them,
and from which they spring? Is it not rather from
a principle of pride, then from a principle of love
and delight to God; from a principle of self-estimati-
on, rather then from a principle of longing for Jesus
Christ, and sorrow for our withdrawing himself from
you? the evil of *Diotrephes* (*desiring the preheminence
amongst the brethren*) it is frequent amongst us, co-
veting to be, as one said, *Aut Cæsar aut nihil*. We
desire either to be singular and matchlesse, or else to
be nothing. We confesse, if a Christian did seriously
ponder these things, and meditate upon them certain-
ly he might blush and be ashamed at his own folly;
he might cover his face with confusion, and not dare
to look up.

But however, we would desire you (even you) that
have in some reality and sincerity of heart, gone
about this most precious and most blessed exercise of
the grace of prayer, that ye may now begin to renew
your diligence, and to add to your diligence, Faith,
and to your Faith, Vertue, and comfort your selves
with this that there is an everlasting feast prepared for
you in heaven above, which is not like the feast of

Assuerus

Assuerus that lasted for an hundred and fourscore [illegible]*r dayes*: but this blessed feast shal last throughout [illegible]l the ages of long and endlesse eternity. Believe it, [illegible] shal be a blessed and everlasting feast. It shal be [illegible] everlasting feast of love. It shal be a feast that [illegible]al not be capable of any period nor end, nor yet [illegible]al know of any loathing. There is no satiety, neither any loathing in heaven. And, O may not this [illegible]omfort you in your journey, & incite and provoke [illegible]our desires to follow after him, who is altogether [illegible]sirable, and altogether lovely, and *that bright and morning star.*

And likewise I would say this to you, even to you who are Atheists and strangers to this precious exercise of the duty of prayer; I think it were compleat misery to you, if there were no more, but that ye are strangers to it, even to the exercise of this duty of prayer: for we think the exercise of godliness it is a reward to it self, as we may say that word, *Pietas sibi præmium.* It is such an inconceivable and excellent a thing, that it is a reward to them whosoever have it: And, Oh! will not your hearts be prevailed with, to fall in love with such a rare and excellent exercise, even with the exercise of godliness, which we conceive is *profitable for all things*? And, O will ye make it your study to pray to God, and to be in the exercise of godlinesse without which ye shal never *see God*; without which ye shal never be admitted to behold him (the beholding of whom is the exercise of all the Saints, & of all the souls of just men now made perfect, and of all those precious thousands that are now about his glorious Throne) and without the exercise of which, these feet of yours shal never be admitted to stand within the blessed gates of that precious City, even the City of *the New Jerusalem*

where

where all the redeemed of the Lord are; and wi
the exerciſe of which, ye ſhal be eternally & unde
redly undone. If ye want godlineſs, ye ſhal und
the pains of hell, and the torments of that lake
burneth with fire and brimſtone: and the day is c
ing when that curſe (that ſad curſe) ſhal be fu
accompliſhed upon you, which is in *Deut.* 28.
Thou ſhalt be mad for the ſight of thine eyes which t
ſhalt behold, and when the Lord ſhal ſmite thee w
an evil that thou canſt not be healed of, even from
ſole of the foot to the crown of thy head, and thou ſh
become an aſtoniſhment, and a proverb unto all Natio
whether ſoever the Lord ſhal carry thee, and thou ſhal
be ſmitten before thine enemies: Thou ſhalt go ou
one way againſt them, and thou ſhalt flee ſeven ways
before them: and thy carcaſs ſhal be meat unto the
fowls of the air, and to the beaſts of the field, and no
ſhal fray them away; and all theſe things ſhal com
upon thee till thou be deſtroyed.

O Atheiſts, what a terrible and dreadful ſight ſhal
it be, when ye ſhal behold thoſe black and hideous
everlaſting chains, that ſhal once be wreathed about
your curſed necks, O, to be thinking that ere long
ye are to dwell and take up your everlaſting priſon,
out of which there is no redemption again; and the
door of the priſon houſe is ſealed with the ſeal of the
King which is an unchangeable and unalterable de-
cree. Oh, if the apprehenſions and thoughts of
this could once provoke and ſtir you up to pity your
own precious and immortal ſouls, (with which there
is no exchange) Oh, what a woful and marvelous
ſtupidity and hardneſs of heart hath overtaken the
people of this preſent generation, that go to hell with
as much delight and eaſe, as if they were going to
heaven? Oh, that your ſpirits were once awaked
from

rom your security, that ye might perceive the woful d miserable condition that ye are lying under, O hristians, what are ye resolved to do? Are ye not frayed that ye shal be be-nighted with your work? Oh, shal the sufferings of these pains first resolve ou, and clear you of the sadness and inextricable rrows that are in that bottomless pit; now to him ho is that blessed Master of assemblies, who can fix ese words as nails in your hearts, and who can rove em therein, to his blessed and holy Name we de- g to give praise.

SERMON IV.

1 Thess. 5. 17. *Pray without ceasing.*

WE desire to commend the blessed and precious estate of those that are now exalted above the reach of this blessed exercise, and who have now made a blessed and precious exchange, that in stead of praying without ceasing, they are now praising without ceasing. And, O beloved of the Lord, (if so we may call you) whether is that blessedness gone which you did speak of, *the enjoyment and fruition of Christ*, so that if ye would have required it of us, *you would have plucked out your right eyes, and given them to him*? O, is he become lesse precious, that your respects to him are so much impaired? Was it not once your divine and blessed lot, that ye could not have lived one day without the enjoyment of him, in whose face your eternal blessednesse doth ly? O, but absence and estrangement from him is thought a dispensable want in these days, and that which is the ground of the expostulation, is, that ye are so little in giving obedience

unto

unto this blessed and precious command, *Pray* [illegible] *without ceasing*. Yea, if the stones and walls of this [illegible] and if the rafters thereof could speak, they [illegible] utter this complaint upon many of the inhabitants [illegible] this City, *that they do not watch unto prayer*, and [illegible] not exercising themselves in the entertaining a div[illegible] & precious correspondence with heaven. Oh! whe[illegible] is the exercise of that precious duty of prayer gon[illegible] O! how independent are we in our talk with God [illegible] O! when did you taste so much of his sweetnesse, [illegible] when ye did reflect upon it, ye were forced to [illegible] *Did not our hearts burn within us, while he spake within us?* When did ye cast an indissolvable knot [illegible] love upon your hearts, which ye hoped eternity could not loose nor dissolve? I wonder that this is not [illegible] question which we do not more debate, how such undervaluers of communion & fellowship with God here below (who can live many dayes without seeing the Sun or Stars, without beholding of him) can walk with such woful contentment? O! can such a delusion overtake you as this, that ye can reign as Kings without Christ, and be rich and full without his fulnesse? It were, no doubt, the special advantage of a christian, to be retiring from all things that are here below, and to be inclosing himself in a sconce for *a blessed & divine contemplation of that invisible Majesty, and to have our souls united to him by a threefold cord which is not easily broken.*

But now to come to the words; the next thing which we intend to speak from this, is, to know what is the most compendious way to keep your souls in life, and to have them flourishing as a watered garden in the exercise of prayer, we shal say these four things unto you.

First

ght be much in the exercise of the grace of fear
en ye go to pray, that ye may have high and reve-
t apprehensions of that glorious and terrible Ma-
y before whom ye pray: there is a precious promise
this in *Isai.* 60. 5 *Thou shalt fear and be enlarged,*
c. O! but our Atheism (and our having that in-
iption engraven on all our devotions, *worshipping*
an unknown God) maketh us to have so little access
to him, and taste so little of that sweetness, *that*
eth the lips of those that are asleep to speak. How
entimes go ye to prayer, and are no more in the
rcise of fear, then if ye were to speak to one that is
low you? Those glorified spirits that are now a-
t his Throne, O with what holy reverence and
r do they adore him! And if it be the practice of
e Higher House, why ought it not to be the practice
this Lower House?

Secondly, if ye would attain to enlargement in the
rcise of prayer, ye would be much in paying those
wes that ye have made to God when ye were enlar-
. I am perswaded of this, that our making iniquity
r vowes, and our deferring to pay them, saying
our practice (before the Angel) *it was an error*;
dorh, no doubt, obstruct our access and liberty to
od: these two are conjoyned together, paying of
ws and access to God, *Job* 22. 27. *Thou shalt make*
thy prayer unto him, and he shal hear thee (which is
ccess) *and thou shalt pay thy vows.* Are there not
any of us that decree many things without our
ves that are not established by God? O, when shal
r resolutions and our practice be of like equal ex-
t.

There is a third thing we would give you as a com-
pendious way to attain to the exercise of prayer, and
enlargements in it, be much in the exercise of fervency

Ah

Ah, when we go to prayer under bonds, and [illegible] nings, we take liberty to our selves to abbrev[illegible] and cut short our prayers? O, do we know w[illegible] a blessed practice this is, to wrestle with God, we[illegible] untill the dawning of the day, *and not to let him [illegible] till he bless us?* What was it that made way to Ja[illegible] enlargements? Was it not his seriousness & ferve[illegible] and these two are oftentimes conjoyned in the P[illegible] *I cryed, and he hard me*; the one importing his [illegible] vency, and the other his access. Our prayers [illegible] the most part, dies before they win up to heaven, [illegible] proceed with so little zeal and fervency from us. [illegible] was the saying of a holy man, that he never w[illegible] from God, without God; that ay where he left h[illegible] he knew where to find him again. It is a saying t[illegible] many of us doth not so much as endeavor to st[illegible] to. Alace, we may say, that sin of neutrality and indi[illegible] ferency in prayer, *hath slain its ten thousands* of e[illegible] joyments; when our sins (in prayer) *hath but sl[illegible] their thousands.*

There is a fourth thing which we shal speak un[illegible] as the most compendious way to attain enlargeme[illegible] in the exercise of prayer & it is this, Ye wold be un[illegible] der a deep & divine impression of these things that y[illegible] are to speak of to God in the exercise of prayer, eith[illegible] to have your spirits under an impression of sorro[illegible] or an impression of joy. In a manner a christian ough[illegible] to speak his prayer to his heart, before he speak it to God; and if we spoke no more nor what our hear[illegible] doth endite, our prayers would not be long, and we should eshew these vain and needless repetitions th[illegible] we use in the exercise of that duty of prayer. O, ho[illegible] we are exceeding rash with our mouth, and hasty with our spirits in uttering things before God. Alm[illegible] we never go to prayer, but if we had so much grace

reflect upon it, we might be convinced of this, we have uttered things that have not been fit to mered to God; as when ye speak of your burdens crosses which ye never did seriously premedi- upon; and likewise speak of these things, as joy, in which ye did never rejoice. O, con- ye him to be altogether such an one as your self such a woful cursed practice and delusion as this ld overtake you? If a Christian would study re he go to prayer, to imprint and engrave his res and petitions upon his heart, he might have liberty and accesse in the proposing of them un- God.

low we shal shut up our discourse upon this noble e and duty of prayer, with this, to speak a little the answers and returns of prayer.

And the first thing that we shal speak upon this ect, is, What can be the reason that the Christi- in these dayes are so little expecting and waiting the return and answer of their prayers. For do not oftentimes pray, and yet doth not know what is to wait for an answer and return to these pray- of ours? this exercise which is so much under- lued by us, the want of it, doth, no doubt, prove that rvelous decay that is in the work of Christians ces. And we conceive that the little waiting for the urn and answer to prayer, doth proceed from the nt of the solide faith, and of the absolute necessity we stand in of those things that we pray to God (for strong necessities makes strong desires, and nest expectations) but we may say, that our cessities dies without petitions; we should be more waiting for, and expecting the returnings of our ayers.

There is this likewise that is the reason of that woful

practice

practice; we have not a lively and deep impre
of the burden of these things which we would
removed by God; as when one is praying fo
removing of some lusts, and some pregnant and
dominate evil, and yet never cares whether it be
moved or not; and the reason of this which ma
us wait for and expect so little the answer and re
of our prayers, is, because we are not groan
under that yoake and burden, as though it were
supportable; but we walk lightly under that yo
and heavy burden, and therefore we wait not for
answers of our prayers; We look upon our chains a
fetters of iniquities, as though they were chains
gold and fetters of silver: and so it is no wonder th
we are not much in the expectation and waiting f
our return of prayer, & to have these chains and fe
ters off us.

And there is this likewise which is the occasion
our little waiting for an answer to our prayers: W
have not a right apprehension and uptaking of
preciousness and excellencies of these things that
seek from God: we do not know and understa
what advantage should flow to us from the having
these things that we seek, and what marvelous di
advantage shal flow to us from the want of the
O! but the people of this present generation, where
in we now live, have but a low rate upon the things o
Religion, which are of their everlasting and soul-con
cernment, even those things that were accounte
most precious and excellent by all those that have
gone before us, and have taken up their possessio
and eternal abode in that blessed land which is above
There is one thing which we do undervalue and se
at naught, and that is our communion and fellowship
with God; We are indifferent in the having of it
and

nd cares not whether we have it or not, which mak-
h us not earneſtly to preſs after the purſuing of it?
O Chriſtians, be perſwaded of it that there are theſe
ree diſadvantages that followeth unto a Chriſtian
at is not much in waiting for the anſwer & return
his prayer after he hath prayed.

The firſt diſadvantage is this, it is a compendious
y to win to formality in the duty of prayer. I will
ot ſay that one which doth not alwayes wait for an
ſwer to his prayer, that he cannot pray in ſpirit
nd in ſincerity & fervency, but I need not be afraid
ſay this, that he which is not much in the exerciſe
waiting for a return and anſwer to his prayer, he
ayes little to purpoſe: and it may be demonſtrated
nd clearly ſhown by this reaſon; can ye be ſerious
the accompliſhment of the the means, if ye do not
ropoſe ſome end and deſign before your eyes why ye
fo? Now, what is the end and ſcope that ye propoſe
fore your ſelves in your going about the exerciſe of
at duty of prayer? I confeſſe, we ought to go about
not only as a help and mean to remove our evils,
nd to obtain our advantages, but likewiſe we ought
go about it as a duty incumbent to us: but if we go
ot about the exerciſe of prayer, under both theſe con-
derations, and except we wait for the return and an-
er; certainly we pray not aright.

There is a ſecond diſadvantage which a Chriſtian
th that doth not wait for the anſwer and return of
is prayer, he loſeth many ſweet experiences of the
ve and goodwil of God towards him. It is no won-
r that many of us doth not receive much from God,
e reaſon of it is, becauſe we are not expecting and
iting for much from him. I will not ſay but a chri-
ian that is not much in the exerciſe of waiting, may

sometimes obtain the answer and return of his prayers; but we may say these things to such persons, if your prayers be answered, and ye have not waited for the return and answer of them, surely ye lose much sweetness & preciousness of the answer of your prayers: There is this likewise which we would say to such persons as these, if a Christians prayer be answered when he doth not wait for the answer of it, then the Christian cannot so resolutely build his faith upon such an experience to believe that God again will answer his prayers, as if he had been waiting upon a return.

There is this third disadvantage that follows a Christian who is not much in the exercise of waiting for the return and answer to his prayer. He cannot continue long in a praying frame. I conceive that the most fit and compendious way for a Christian to keep his spirit in a holy and divine correspondence with God, is to have it always in a holy and fit capacity to converse with God: this is a way to be much in the exercise of waiting for the return and answer of prayer. It is a sweet exercise to be expecting and waiting *till the vision shal speak* to you.

Now are there not many here who if ye were posed with this question, When were ye put to the serious exercise of waiting for the return and answer of your prayers after ye have prayed? I am perswaded of it, ye should find it a difficultie to fall upon the number of the dayes wherein ye were taken up in this exercise. I think that which doth so plainly demonstrate that woful formality and dreadful indifferency that is amongst us (in going about the exercise of this duty of prayer) is this, We do not wait for the answers and returns of our prayers from God. O christians, are ye so perfectly compleat, or have ye alto-

y attained to the full stature of one in Christ, that e do not wait for the answer and returns of your prayers, that so ye may receive more from God?

And I would say this to these atheists and strangers to God, who never knew what it was to wait for an answer and return to their prayers: and are there not many such here, who if their consciences were now posed, when they did wait for a return to their prayers, they might (if they speak the truth) say that they did ever wait for an answer to their prayers, I say to ch, that they did never pray aright.

Now the second thing which we shal speak upon e returns and answers of prayer, is, how a christian ay come to the distinct knowledge of this, that his ayers are heard and answered? A thing indeed, we confesse, that many of us are not much taken up ith, we not being in the exercise to know such a ing.

And first, there is a difference betwixt the hearing prayer, and of getting a return & answer to pray- r, God in the depth of his unsearchable wisdom, ay sometimes hear our prayers, and yet make a long time to interveen before he give the sensible re- urn and answer of that prayer: this is clear from *Dan.* 10. 12. 13. where it is said to *Daniel*, *that from the first day that he afflicted his soul, his prayers and supplications were heard*: and yet it is one and twenty dayes before the answer & return of his pray- r did come. These are two distinct mercies to the Christian, the hearing of his prayer and receiving he answer and return of his prayer which he hath prayed for. And it is clear from *Ps.* 34, 6. *This poor man cryed, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his trouble.*

We shal say this secondly, that there is a great

and vast difference betwixt the returns of prayer, and the delayes of the returns of it, and yet it were a bad inference to infer that God doth deny to give us the answer of our prayers, though he delay them a while, or to say that we can have no answer at all, though we confesse, that is the common place from which Christians doth bring all their arguments to prove that their prayers are not heard, even the delay of the answer and return to their prayers: and this is clear from, Rev. 6. 10. 11. *Where the soules of those that are crying to God for the revenge of their blood upon the earth*, their prayer is heard, and yet withall *they are desired to stay a little, untill their brethren (that are to be slain) shal be fulfilled, and then their prayer be fulfilled and accomplished unto them.*

There is this thirdly, that we shal speak to, and it is this, That sometimes our prayers may be both heard and answered, and yet we will not believe that it is so, when we are waiting for the distinct and solid apprehension of this mercy: and we conceive that this is either occasioned through the greatnesse of affliction upon a Christian; & the continuance of the stroke, as it is evidently clear from, Job 9. 16. 17. where Job saith: If I *had called, and he had answered me, yet would I not believe that he had hearkned unto my voice.* And he gives this to be the reason of it, *For he breaketh me with a tempest and multiplieth my wounds without cause.* Or this may be the reason of it likewise, Why? when our prayers are both heard and answered, we believe not that it is so, and it is because of the want of the exercise of waiting for an answer, that we are not much taken up in expecting a return from God to our prayers, therefore when our prayers are heard and answered, we cannot believe that it is so.

The

There is this fourth thing which we shal speak to, concerning the returns of prayer, that the prayers and petitions of a Christian, even while he is under the exercise of misbelief, they may be heard and taken off his hand, as it is clear from *Psal.* 116. 11, 12. *I said in my haste, all men are liars:* But there is a sweet and precious experience which followeth that, *What shal I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?* and this is clear from *Jonah* 2. 4. compared with vers. 7. where he saith, *I am cast out of thy sight*; and yet he saith in vers. 7. *when my soul fainted within me, I remembred the Lord, & my prayer came in unto thee, unto thine holy Temple.*

Now, to give some answer to the question which we proposed, how one may know whether or not his prayers be answered: First, if a Christian be enlarged & enabled to go on in duty, though he do not receive a sensible manifestation of the grant & acceptation of his prayer, but (in a manner) he is denied of the answer and return of it, yet if he do attain to such a length, as to *pray without ceasing*, and to have strength to accomplish this duty of prayer, that is (no doubt) a clear token and evidence that your prayers and supplications are heard by God, and in his own and appointed time these prayers of yours shal be answered, and this is clear in *Psal.* 138. 3. where *David* giveth this as a token and evidence that his prayers were heard and answered; *In the day when I cryed thou answeredst me*: & what is his argument that he bringeth to prove this, that his prayer was answered? it is, *and strengthnedst me with strength in my soul.* Certainly it is a bad sign, and an evil token that your prayers are heard; if because he denieth your suit and petition for a time, ye leave off the exercise of the duty of prayer, and faint in the day of your adversity.

There is a second thing by which you may know whether or not your prayers have met with a return and answer from God, and it is this, if your prayers be suitable unto his own word, and agreable unto his holy and most divine will and pleasure, then you may be perswaded of this that God hath heard your prayers, this is abundantly clear from, 1 John 5.14. *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us.* Certainly it is difficult and exceeding hard, we confesse, for a Christian to exercise faith upon the sure word of prayer, abstracting from all other grounds: But if we would have our faith elevated and raised to so divine a pitch, we would believe this precious truth, *That whatsoever we ask according to his will he heareth us*, and that he will answer our supplications, therefore will ye wait patiently and faithfully upon God.

There is this 2. thing whereby you may know whether or not your prayers be heard & it is, if ye have delight and spiritual joy, in the exercise of this blessed duty of prayer, though ye have not the return & answer of your prayers, yet it is an evidence and token that your prayers are heard, and you shal shortly have an answer given to them: and when you lose your delight in duties which ye once attained to, then ye may be afraid thereat; there is somewhat of this hinted at in *Job* 27.9.10. where *Job* giveth this as a reason and ground that he will not hear the prayer and supplication of the hypocrites, *because he delighteth not himself in the Almighty*: Inferring this much, that if he would delight himself in God, then he would hear his prayer and give him a return and answer to it.

There is this fourth thing whereby you may know whether or not your prayers are heard and answered

and

and it is when your ſadneſs and anxiety (about that which you were asking from God in prayer) is removed and taken away: this is cleare from, 1 *Sam.* 1. 18. where this is given as an evidence that *Hanna* was heard in her prayer and ſupplication, *becauſe her countenance was no more ſad*, and certainly when our prayers have ſuch a return, then we may know diſtinctly that they are anſwered by the Lord.

And the fifth thing that we would propoſe to you whereby ye may know whether or no: your prayers have met with a return and anſwer from God, if ye pray making uſe of Jeſus Chriſt as a bleſſed Dayesman to interpoſe himſelf betwixt the Father & you, then you may be perſwaded of this, that your prayers are heard; this is cleare, where it is twiſe repeated, *Joh.* 14:13, 14. *whatſoever ye ask in my name ye ſhal receive it*, ſbelieve it, he can deny you nothing that you ſeek from him, if you ask in faith.

Now that which thirdly we ſhal ſpeak to upon the return of prayer, it is, to theſe things which doth obſtruct the hearing of our prayers, why they are not anſwered by him, ſo that ofteatimes when we pray to him, *he ſhutteth out our prayers from him, and covereth himſelf with a cloud, ſo that our prayers cannot paſs thorow*: O but if that durie and precious counſel which *Ezekiah* gave unto *Iſaiah*, 37. 4. which truly is worthy to be engraven on our hearts) *Liſt up thy prayer*, &c, which doth import that it was a weighty thing which would require much ſeriouſneſs in going about it: I ſay, if that worthie counſel were obeyed, we ſhould not have need to propoſe theſe obſtructions, and to complain of Gods wayes. Now we ſhal ſpeak to theſe obſtructions which hinders us,

First, hypocrisie which we have in the exercise of prayer: O but we pray much with our judgements when we pray not much with our affections: that is, our light will cry out crucifie such a lust; and our affection will cry again our, hold thy hand, it is difficultie to have the spirit of a Christian brought such a length, as to have his judgements and affections of like measure and extent; *Job* giveth this as a reason why God wil not hear a hypocrites prayer, *Job* 27. 10. even because he is not constant there is a woful disagreeance betwixt what we speak and what we think: we speak many things with our mouth which our hearts sometimes witness that we would not have God granting us (in a manner) our affection is a protestation against the returns to many of our prayers; Our idols are so fixed in our hearts, that we spare *Agag* the King of our lusts, though there be given out a commandment from the Lord to destroy all their; and it may oftentimes speak, that the bitterness of death is past out against us: Seeing we do oftentimes spare them contrary to his blessed command.

There is a second thing which obstructs the exercise of prayer, and it is that woful and cursed end that we propose to our selves in going about this dutie, this is clear in *James* 4. 3. *You ask, and receive not, because ye ask amisse, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.* O! that woful idolary that Christians does intertain in the exercise of prayer, That glorious and inconceivable attribute of God of being *Alpha and Omega*, which we do sacrilegiously attribute to our selves in making our selves the beginning of our prayers and the end of them also, it hinders much our return of prayer; certainly these woful ends that we speak of in the beginning of our dis-

discourse (and all alongst it) it doth (no doubt) marvelously obstruct the answers of our prayers.

Now the last thing that we shal speak upon the return of prayer, shal be to some advantages which a christian may have from this, that his prayers are answered, and that he hath received a return from the Lord, believe me, there is more love in the answer of one prayer then Eternity could make a commentary upon; O, what love is in this, that he should condescend to hear our prayers? That such a glorious and infinite Majesty should (in a manner) deign himself to bow down his ear to take notice of these pettie desires that we propose unto him? And there are these five advantages that a Christian may have from this.

1. It is an excellent way to keep the grace of love in exercise, this is clear in *Psal.* 116, 1, *I love the Lord because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.* O but love in some hath eminently taken fire when they have reflected upon this, that their prayers are heard.

There is this second advantage that a christian hath, it is an excellent motive and perswasion to make us constant and frequent in the exercise of prayer, this is clear in *Psal.* 116. 2. where he reflecteth upon the hearing of his voice, *therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.* I am perswaded of this, that our little exercise in prayer, doth much proceed from this, that we wait not for a return of prayer, and therefore oftentimes it is so that we do not receive a return; believe me, there is more joy and divine satisfaction to be found in the solide and spiritual convictions of this that our prayers are heard, then we will have in the exercise of many prayers that we pray.

There is a third advantage that a Christian hath from the return and answer of his prayer, it is an evident token from the Lord that his prayer is accept-

ed by him, when a Christian can read his reconciliation by the gracious returns of his *prayer*, & that he is in a gracious estate and condition, and, O! is not that a great advantage? We confess God may hear the prayers of the wicked for mercies that are common, but the hearing of a real Christians prayer both for mercies common and special, proveth that his person is accepted by God, we must be accepted of him through Jesus Christ, before that he can have pleasure in our sacrifice, and is not this a precious advantage to read your adoption upon the returns and answers of your prayers from God? May not the Christian say when he meets with such a return and answer of his prayer, now *I* am perswaded *that I am begotten unto a lively hope, because he hath heard the voice of my supplication*? In a manner, it is a character wherein you may read your interest and infeftment in that precious and most blessed inheritance that is above. O if there were no more to provoke you to wait for the result and answer of your prayers, nor this, it may be sufficient unto many of these debates and disputings that you have about your interest in Jesus Christ. And O may not this argument provoke you to love him.

The fourth advantage that comes to the Christian from the consideration of the return and answers of his prayer, It is a compendious way to make us desist from the committing of iniquity. Hence is that word in Ps 6. 8. where upon the consideration of the hearing of his prayer, he breaketh forth in that saying, *Depart from me all ye workers of iniquity, for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.* In a manner, speaking so much, that he would have nothing to do with such ones as they were.

Lastly, the return and answer of prayer is an-

excellent way to keep our faith in exercise, it is a sweet experience of the love of God, upon which we may build our hope in our darkest nights even to call to mind these things that he hath given to us in former dayes, certainly a holy and divine reflection upon these things might perswade us that he will not shut up his tender and loving mercies, into an everlasting forgetfulnesse,

Now to close up our discourse upon this noble duty and grace of prayer, we shal desire this one thing of you, *Who is begotten unto a lively and precious hope*, That you may be more in that noble exercise; I may say, that there is no sin which a christian shal be more deeply convinced of in the day when his feet shal be standing upon the utmost line of time, as this sin of the neglect of the duty of prayer: And we confesse God may reprove many, *That they bind heavy burdens on mens shoulders that are grievous to be born, and doth not so much themselves, as touch them with one of their fingers.*

But however, seriously enlarge your hearts unto this blessed exercise, for believe me, it is the way (if so we may speak) to bring down heaven upon earth. But alace, I am afraid that this duty of prayer is not much now in practice amongst many of us in these days: is not prayer that noble duty almost laid by in this evil and perverse generation as a thing unsavory? Oh that ye had now a divine anticipation of that glorious enjoyment of him, which you shal have throughout all the ages of Eternity if you be serious in this exercise! Oh may we not walk mourning some many dayes in the bitternesse of our soul, because we are not more in the exercise of secret prayer? Oh! whether is our devotion gone in these dayes? Oh! whether is it gone

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I am afraid, that if these that have lived before in ancient dayes, were now alive, doubtlesse they would be ignorant of us, and they would not acknowledge us for Christians. I would say this for these who never seriously practised this duty as yet, of which number there are many: O, but prayer be another thing then the most part of you conceives it to be. I think it is not only mysterious in its nature, to conceive how the spirit of man can converse with him that is the Father of spirits, how there should intervene a communion and fellowship betwixt such two. It is a mystery and riddle surely, which we cannot easily unfold. But withall, *This is a lamentation and shall be for a lamentation, that the exercise and practice of prayer is grown as mysterious as the nature of it.* O, but there are many of you that supposes ye are praying aright, and therefore you think all is well, who shal be cut off as those that never prayed. I conceive if we believe all that is spoken upon this exercise of prayer, what divine properties are requisite to a Christian that would seriously go about the exercise of this precious duty, we might cry forth, *This is a hard saying, who can bear it?* And certainly it is altogether impossible for us, though it be not impossible for God, to inlarge our hearts to pursue it; *For with him nothing is impossible.* Oh, that if once ye might be perswaded to set about the exercise of this precious and most excellent duty of prayer, which will be to your eternal advantage, and soul everlasting concernment, I am afraid (O Christians) that if one from heaven (who hath entered into these everlasting and blessed possessions of that excellent and blessed estate of life) wold come down to earth (if so with reverence we may speak) and preach upon this Text of ours, *Pray without ceasing*, and

speak

speak of these precious and unspeakable advantages which do accompany the man that is much in the exercise of prayer, there be many of us, I fear, would scarcely be inclined to hear such an exhortation. And more nor this, if one from the dead would arise, and come from the pit unto this city, and preach upon this Text unto you, *Pray without ceasing*, having the chains of everlasting wrath hanging about his neck, and preach upon these sad and unspeakable disadvantages which are to be found in the neglect of this blessed exercise of this duty of prayer, and should desire you to flee *from that wrath that is to come*. Oh, would there not be many of you (I am afraid) who would stop your ears, and would not listen unto the voice and language of such an exhortation? Ah whether are many of us going? Whether are we going? Certainly the apprehensions & thoghts of everlasting leparation from the presence of the Lord is not much ingraven and deeply imprinted upon the spirits of the hypocritical christians of this generation? we are not afraid of that wrath and eternal destruction which is approaching unto us.

But to you that are heirs of the promise, who are heirs of the grace of life, & *who are begotten again unto a lively hope*. I would say this unto you, *Pray without ceasing*; and once you shal sing without all ceasing, & without all interruption: & to these that pray not, the day is coming when they shal howle in that bottomless pit amongst those everlasting flames of fire and brimstone, when they shal be brayed in the morter of the wrath of God by the pestel of his severe Justice, when his omnipoeency shal uphold you, and his Justice shal smite you eternally. Oh, it were many of your advantages that you were indeed

(indeed) beasts without immortal souls. For to [illegible] souls, doth capacitate you from an eternal being, for an eternal punishment.

SERMON V.

Pro. 4. 23. *Keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life.*

WE conceive if there were a window opened in each one of our bosoms, through which each one of us that are here, might behold one another's hearts, we would become monsters and wonders one of us to another, and to our selves likewise, and might cry out, O, *where is the God of judgement that takes not vengeance on such deceitful hearts?* If our hearts were turned out of us (so to speak) and if we saw the inside of our hearts, we would wonder at his patience. I think such is the desperate deceitfulnesse of our hearts, that if all the Saints since *Adams* dayes, and shal be to the end of the world, had but one heart to guide, I think they would misguide it. I would only say this to believers, that if your hearts were left one hour to your selves to keep, ye would commit more iniquity, then he can imagine or dream of. There is only three things that I would speak to before I come to the words: and I would request you to take notice of them. And first, there is many of us that hath two hearts in our bosome, for such an one is the hypocrite. *James* 1. 8. *A double minded man is unstable in all his wayes* that is, a man that hath two hearts a part of his heart goeth to God and a part of his heart goeth to the devil. And I think, if we were all well searched, it is to be feared that many

any of us would be found two hearted men, Secondly that although ye would give Christ all your members, yet if you would not give him your hearts, it would be nothing thought of; if you would give him your eye, so that you should not look to your idols pleasantly; nor yet look with delight upon any cursed or sinful object; and if you would give him your ears, so that you could nor wold not hearken to the voice of any of your temptations; *but be as deaf as an adder unto them*; and if you would give him your tongue so that you should not speak any thing dishonourable to him. & if you would give him your feet, so that you should not walk in any way, but in the approven path of godliness; Now I say, although you would give him all these members of your body, yet if ye give him not your heart, it is all to no purpose, *Prov.* 23. 26. *My son, give me thy heart, &c.*

Thirdly, there are many which give their hearts to their idols, and their tongues to Christ, but in one day they shall be found to be but deceivers. Lastly, it is a noble thing for a Christian to be taken up in the keeping of his heart: I may say this of the heart which the Apostle *James* says not the tongue, *it is an unruly evil full of old deadly poison*, *James* 3. 8. The heart is taken up with whoring from God, and with contriving the way how to satisfie its lusts, and continually forsaking the living God: our hearts are doing nothing in all our life time (many of us) but profaning his holy Name and blaspheming the God of Jacob.

Now to come to the words, there are four things to be cleared. First, the duty imposed upon a christian, and that is to keep his heart. Secondly, that the heart of man hath many seekers, which is implied in that word, keep. Thirdly, you have the qualification and way how

how a Christian should keep his heart, which are ordered in these words, *with all diligence*, or as words may be rendered, *with all keeping*. And lastly the reasons why you should do so, *for out of it are the issues of life*, for if you do so, you shal have life but if not, from thence is the issues of death. From the first thing in the words, ye would consider these two things.

First, that is a duty incumbent to every Christian to keep his heart; this is clear, not only from the Text, but likewise in *Deut.* 4. 9. *Only take heed to thy self, and keep thy soul diligently, &c.* Prov. 23. *Guide thy heart in the way.* Which is, study to keep it diligently in the way of godliness, and it is clear likewise that a Christian ought to keep his heart from the great advantages that are holden out in Scripture for so doing, only take that place in *Pro.* 16. 32. *Better is he that ruleth his spirit, then he that taketh a city.*

The second thing that I would say, is, to paint out the woful disadvantages that waits upon him that rules not his own heart, but gives it leave to rove here and there, *Prov.* 25. 28. *He that hath not rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls?* And there is here two disadvantages that waits upon not keeping of the heart, 1. There is no temptation that assaults a heart that is not kept, but they become victorious, spiritual strength hath forsaken them that keeps not their hearts. 2. There is no exercise nor duty a Christian is imployed in, which keeps not his heart, but he is like a ruinous city which hath no walls, and in which there is no order

Now, the next thing that I wold speak to, is to shew what it imports to keep the heart, and what are the directions and wayes which a Christian ought to have before him in the exercise and duty of keeping his heart.

And

And first, it imports this, that a Christian should observe the motions of his heart, and should not let his heart nor thoughts go astray, but should have a register of all their motions, as is clear in Luke 21.34. *And take heed to your selves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenesse and cares of this life; and so that day come upon you unawares.*

The second thing which keeping of the heart includes is, You must keep all the things that pertains to your hearts; and there are these five things which ye must keep, First, your thoughts, you must keep your thoughts so straitly, that you must not give them any sinful latitude in the least manner. Secondly, a Christian he must keep his eyes, which are the windows through which much wickedness is conveyed to the soul, *Prov.* 23. 26. *My son give me thy heart. &c. Prov.* 4. 25. *Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye-lids look straight before thee:* as if Solomon had said, it is but foolishness to keep your hearts, if ye keep not your eyes. Thirdly, ye must keep your tongues that they speak no evil of the wayes of godliness, for so is the words following the text, *Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee,* which is, Order thy tongue. Fourthly, you must keep your feet, that you walk not in the paths of wickednesse, if once you give a latitude to your feet to go in the way to hell, it shal be but in vain to keep your hearts, therefore keep your feet from running to the murther of your own souls. Lastly, ye must keep your ears, ye should delight to speak good of godliness and ye should also delight to hear good spoken of it: ye should not be among these that savor of nothing but of sin, but ye should be amongst these that savor of good, therefore as ye would not

be

be accessary to the murther of your own soule
as ye would not have the blood of them lyin
your heads, ye must needs keep all these part
belongs to the keeping of your heart aright.

The third thing which the keeping of your he
includes, is to eshew all unclean things that m
file your hearts: *Prov.* 5.8. *Remove thy way fa*
her, and come not nigh the door of her house. W
you see any evil thing approaching, you must d
from it & eshew it; *Deut.* 12.30. *Take heed to t*
that thou be not snared; there is many snares that
be accessary to destruction, and there is this that
marks as a chief evil, and likewise oftentimes forb
in this book to have false *weights and ballances*,
19 39. *Deut.* 25.15. they are not sinful of themse
but because they are an appearance of evil, we
eshew them, therefore he forbids them; and the Apo
bids us likewise *abstain from all appearance of evil*,
Thes. 5.22.

The fourth thing which keeping of the heart
cludes, is to put restraints on your hearts that so
may not commit iniquity, ye ought first to lay
bond of Christs love upon your selves, ye sho
likewise lay the bond of judgement upon your selv
knowing that once God shal call you to a reckoni
for all your wickedness, which now most wicked
you commit; and ye ought to lay the bonds of G
Omniscience upon your selves, to know and co
sider that all things are known to him, and that
seeth all things, and ye ought likewise to consider h
grievous and how displeasant a thing sin is to the
Majestie of God, that man who is the workmanship
of his hand, shal rise up against him: We ma
say that of our selves which is in *Lament.* 3.22. *It*
of the Lords mercies that we are not consumed, becaus

compassions fast not, they are fresh every morning;
. All these things a Christian ought to lay to heart
d seriously to consider them.

he fifth thing which keeping of the heart includes,
Christian ought not to slight the opportunities
en unto him for the strengthning of his grace; for
y which slight opportunities, keep not their own
rts.

The last thing which it imports, is, that a Christi
would be much in the diligent exercise of duties,
t the heart may be kept & holden in a noble frame,
l there is two exercises which a Christian ought to
diligent in, First the exercise of prayer, Secondly
exercise of watching. There is a five-fold frame
ich a Christian should be in, which would right
keep his heart. First, in a frame of praying, that he
uld not be slack & cold-rife to go about duties, the
m and thereof is holden out in that word, *Watch*
pray; and also in that word, *pray without ceasing*.
he second frame should be a believing frame, and
is to be feared that there are not many such here,
that there are many walking in such a way and
me, which, alace, I fear, will lead them in the
y to hel! If we were sincere, we would hold Christ
, and would not let him go, & if our hearts were
a right frame, we would avoid any thing that might
ake him to depart from us; But, alace! we have
ny clear evidences (now a dayes) that we care not
Christ; we care not whether we have his presence
want it; the want of his presence is as lightsome
d pleasant to us, and as well taken with by many,
I will not say all) as the enjoying of his presence;
d this is a sure evidence of gross prophaneness, igno-
nce, and estrangement from God. If there were no
ore to prove it but this, your stoutnesse of heart to

medle

meddle with sin, proves that you are unsound ch
ans. We would desire you by all the torments of
and by all the terrors of that everlasting lake w
burneth with fire and brimstone for ever and e
by all the joyes of heaven, of that higher house,
ye would carry a circumspect walk before God.
third frame that we would desire you to walk in,
a tender frame: and if so ye were walking ye
be loath to commit sin wilfullie, and w
them eternally which do so. We will not (ma
of us) believe this, although Angels would pre
it unto us, for our hearts are hard like an Adam
stone. I would only say this to you, this
this glorious Book *is sealed with seven seals*, and
hearts are sealed with fourteen seals. O, wo be
those hard hearts that many of us have, we will
ver know untill they run us eternally into the
comlesse pit. The fourth frame that a christian sh
walk in, is in a loving frame. You ought to
your hearts burning within you with love towa
that glorious, infinite, and mysterious object, Je
Christ. We shal never be able to comprehended
recompense that love which he hath to us: for
furtherst we can go, is to be sick of love for him.
O, he died with love for us: he had so great lov
us, that he laid down his life for us. The fifth fr
that a christian should walk in, is a fearing fr
to walk under the fear of the hazard that you a
if you be left to your selves, & to your own stre
I may say, curled be the person that never keeped
heart in none of theses things that we have spoken
Now the third thing we would speak to from t
words is, to know the times when a christian
especially keep his heart; and there is six times w
(I conceive) he should watch over his heart carefu
and keep it.

1. Af

After he hath met with some enjoyments, then he ould keep his heart and not let it go wrong.

The 2. time is, in the time of desertion; for that e is a wandring time from the living God.

A christian should keep his heart when he perives his temptations to be very subtile.

And the 4. time is, to keep your hearts diligent in ies, for when you are negligent in duties, then the vils is busie to get your hearts.

The 5. time is under a secure frame, then you shold ep your hearts mightily.

nd the last time, when temptations are like to grow y strong, you should then at that time keep your arts with a strong guard.

Now as for the first time, to wit, to keep it under joyments, we should then study to keep our hearts, them, and at that time the devil condescends to dle us upon his knees (if so we may speak) and for is we would give you some considerations.

The first *consideration* is, the heart of man is never ouder and proner to commit iniquity, then after enyments of God, he is never more prone to security en after enjoyments, when was it that the spouse ept, but when she was full of joy? *Song* 5.3. *I have t off my coat how shal I put it on again?* &c. When as it that the Disciples raved, but when they were on the Mount, when they said, *Let us make three Tabernacles, Mat.* 17.14. And when was it that John committed Idolatry? was it not when he saw these excelent visions of heaven.

The 2. *consider.* is, that the stroke which is given by the devil after enjoyments it is a very sad stroke & hath caused many to say, *Who can stand before the children of Anak?* and to draw that conclusion, *I shal once fall by the hand of some of mine enemies*

The

The third consideration is this, if a Christian brace a temptation after enjoyments, it will be hard for him to shake it off.

The fourth consideration is, that the imbracing a temptation after enjoyments, it is a sin very ha to be repented for, it will cost him many tears se penting of it; for it is a hardning thing which harden his heart mightily under all sorts of sins w we can commit.

Fifthly, consider this, that the imbracing of a t tation after enjoyments, it is very displeasing Christ, when ye imbrace an idol, and prefers it fore an absent Christ. O that is a most dange sin! But when you imbrace an idol after enjoym that is a damnable sin, for ye prefer it to a pre Christ; O that is a fearful sin.

Now the second time when ye should keep you hearts is, when ye are going about the exercise duties, and especially in the duty of prayer, and should keep it in four or five respects. First, in goi about duties, and namely in prayer; ye are letti in vain thoughts, if your hearts be not well keep Secondly the heart of a Christian is most ready to in the sin of formality, and therefore if ye keep your hearts well in duties, you cannot be but form in the performance of them; Thirdly, our hearts ma times have too low thoughts and uptakings of incomprehensible Majesty of God; The damna ignorance which is amongst people, makes them so little advantage in prayer, do you not speak to as to one of your fellow companions? Where is th exercise of fear, and of trembling, which Christia in old times used to have, as *Moses* when he appro and came before God? Fourthly our hearts are pro to misbelief, and ready always to misbelieve G

his promises. Lastly, except ye keep your hearts impossible for you to take alongst with you ne- tle, if one were standing by and heard your yers, they would say that you are not in earnest h God; for you seek such things from a principle ght, and not from necessity. Now I would pose with this, whether ever ye have been observant in of these duties or not, There are many whose yers make them to have more distance with God, refore I would request you to look to this, that ye serious in prayer, and to know whether or not this your frame, for there is some that will come from yer with far moe bonds on them then when they an, and what is the reason of this, but want of ency? It is a great mystery of his love that he ds not fire from Heaven to burn our sacrifice, and sume our selves likewise? for what is many of prayers, *but as it were the cutting off of a dogs neck* ich *is an abomination to the Lord!*

The third time when a Christian should especially p his heart, is under desertion; and I shal give you e reasons why he should watch well at that time t, the devil is busiest to seek our hearts under sertion. Secondly, the imbracing of an idol un- desertion; it is for that why God lengthens out time of our lying under desertion so long, be- se we go to the bed of love with an idol when rist is away, Thirdly, because a Christian hath least ength then, he loseth both much of his faith and of love. Haketh me you then to look on the world as lesse as the white of an egge; ye must take that as dispensation of Christs love, that he makes all things lesse to you under desertion; That is a noble dis- sation, for by it he imposes a necessity upon you keep your hearts till he return unto you again.

The

The fourth time when a Christian should ke
heart, is, in a secure frame: I think there are
sleeping in a sleep of conscience, which will nev
wake till the iereighings of the damned in hell a
them. I shal propose these two considerations to
your hearts in security. 1. Because when ye are se
ye have then least strength; and is there not ma
mongst you that dare say but that the devil then
faults you matt bitterly? and when your heart is l
in security, it speaks that ye are in a carnal frame
If ye keep not your hearts when ye are secure, the
may bid faith, love, and joy farewell until I come
ther time, as ye may see in the practice o *Felix*,
away, and I will hear thee another time, Acts 24.
I would not desire a more sad case to an enemie
not to keep his heart when he is under security, fo
may bid the graces of the spirit farewell until I an
time.

The last time when a Christian ought especiall
keep his heart, is, when strong and subtile temp
ons appear plausible, honest like & beautiful, then
must be upon your watch. O doth not tempt a
win in upon your hearts, before ever ye be a war
this speaks much security and unwatchfulness
would say it is hard, yea, very hard to a Chri
who is not watchful to take up the ways of the d
whose wayes are more subtile ther *the way of an*
in the air or the way of a Serpent upon a rock, o
way of a ship upon the sea. Who can comprehe
his wayes? He tempts us alwayes, both upon
right hand and upon our left hand, both behind
before, both awaking and sleeping; we are
free of his deceitful and unsearchable crafts. I
say this unto you. He is happy that fears alw
and hearkens to Christs voice of direction

rd, depending upon him for strength, but many neth more to the voice of temptations nor to rists blessed voice.

Now, the next thing which I would speak to, is propose some considerations to presse you to keep r hearts; and, O that ye would consider of them lay them to heart.

The first consideration is this, I think many of may be afraid that the devil dwells and keeps ssession in many of our hearts, and alace, He is to be a possessor of some of them perpetually: will give you five evidences of one that (by all pearance, the devil hath his heart. And, now I rge you (O Atheists) in the Name of our Lord d Saviour precious Christ, that ye would examine r selves by them. First was never one of you con- ced to cry out that word in *Psal.* 25. 11. *For names sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for is great*; I say to such persons that was never con- ced to cry out this, & were never convinced of the d difficultie to win to the right keeping of your rts, by all appearance the devil hath your hearts keeping, for these whose hearts are in the hands the devil, they are never sensible of their lost e- t. Secondly, these who never wan to make use Christ, that is a token that the devil hath their rts in keeping: there are many of us who is con- ced of the vanity of our idols., but yet, alace, ny of us drowneth our convictions with the sin tippling, and buries them in the sepulchre of drun- nesse; but believe it, if ye go on so and continue rein, God will plead with you for the samine. The d evidence, one that hath a silent hardned and eiving conscience, and whose conscience is silent, all appearance the devil hath that persons heart

in his hand, for the devil intiseth many to sin wi[illegible] greediness and will make their conscience not to r[illegible] prove them, so that they delight in no better, fo[illegible] hath taken away the tongue of their conscience, [illegible] that it cannot speak: But believe it, the day is com[illegible] ing when your conscience shal be the greatest foe a[illegible] enemie that ye can or shal have, and believe it, the[illegible] are many of you here who have your hearts so hard[illegible] ned as those that are mentioned: *Ephes.* 4. 1[illegible] 18. *Who walk in the vanity of their own mind, ha[illegible] ing the understanding darkned? being alienated fro[illegible] the life of God, through the ignorance that is in the[illegible] because of the blindness of their hearts.* Your con[illegible] science when it is cauterized it will not speak to y[illegible] although ye would commit that damnable *sin agai[illegible] the holy Ghost.* And ye think your selves well [illegible] nough when it doth not reprove you; But, alace, [illegible] sleep with a false witness in your bosome, it ha[illegible] many alluring delusions, but one day the words of [illegible] will be as sharp as swords; it will cry, *Peace, peac[illegible] when behold sudden destruction*: *It* will make y[illegible] sleep sound for all the danger that is hanging abo[illegible] you. Ye walk (many of you) *adding drunke[illegible] ness to thirst.* O Atheists! What will ye do wh[illegible] that day shal come upon you, when these two boo[illegible] shal be opened? First, the book of your wandrin[illegible] and backslidings, in which a hudge innunmera[illegible] group of sins are written. And secondly, the bo[illegible] of your conscience, and there can be nothing read [illegible] of that first book but thy conscience shal confirm[illegible] with *Amen.*

The second consideration is, that if ye were to [illegible] eighty years, and though ye would weep and mo[illegible] fourty of these years perpetually, if it co[illegible] be possible, and pray other fourty of th[illegible]

ars; yet all that would be for nought, if ye will ot give him your hearts: Believe me, if ye give ot him your hearts, that sentence shal be pronoun- ed upon you, *Depart*, Oh, will ye not give him your earts who ought to have them, both by creation and demption?

The third consideration is, Did ye ever find any difficulty to believe, or to pray, or to love God? Ye may be perswaded of it, that ye are sleeping under dangerous delusion, that ye think ye are going nd shal go to heaven, when ye shal be thrust down o hell. I would say this, there hath been much joy mongst the devil and his angels, for the succ:ss which hath had in *Glasgow*: he hath purchased many hat- ers to himself who sing that cursed song, *I am not from victory*. I think we may turn that word in- another way, which Christ said to his disciples, *there is one of you twelve that shal betray me*. I ink he may say otherwise of us, eleven of each welve that are here will betray me. O, it is sad, that e Son of God, even precious Christ, should have many betrayers amongst us! O, therefore give hrist your hearts: Did ye never read that of *Matth.* 5.2. there was five wise virgins; and five foolish, d if there be of professors that shal be rejected; ee, what shal come of you that never knew him? *nd if the righteous scarcely be saved, O, what shal the ngodly and sinners do.*

The fourth consideration is, I would propose these ree things to you. First, what is the cause, O theists, that ye cannot endure hypocrisie, why ye nnot look upon Christians? The cause is, you e not only the image and picture of Christ, but very substance of Christ. Why hate ye not the of sins, as well as hypocrisie? It is because the

[illegible] of sins looks rather like the devil, and therefore [illegible] love them: but hypocrites seem to have something of God in them, therefore ye hate them. Secondly, O Atheists! do ye believe that there is a heaven and a hell, and an eternity of pain, and a day of judgement? if ye believed those things, ye would not be so prophane. Thirdly, did ye ever find any delight in praising and commending of him? Your heart saith, No, and your practice saith, no, O wo, wo to you eternallie?

The fifth consideration is, the day is approaching, when the least iniquity shal be preached in the hearing of angels and men that ever ye committed; there shal not a jot of sin be passed by; and of all sinners, the hypocrites shal have the saddest countenance, because they shal be disappointed of a joyful end, and lose the opinion of the Saints, which will make them to look with a sad countenance in that day. A hypocrite will be more moved for the loss of the approbation of the Saints; then for the loss of divine approbation, O! know and consider this three things. First, know that all your iniquities shal be read in the hearing of Angels and Men; [illegible] verie thoughts which ye have had at midnight, [illegible] be known, What will be your thoghts then, O athei[illegible] in that day? Secondly, know that hypocrisie [illegible] win easily throgh the worldunder the name of gra[illegible] but in that day there shal be a clear distinction ma[illegible] It is hard to rid marches betwixt hypocrisie and gra[illegible] but God shal take your visorn off your face, and [illegible] you be known, and ye shal get the name which [illegible] deserve, O hypocrites. Thirdly, know that wo [illegible] be to such, which shal not be found in Christ at th[illegible] day; O will ye take him, and give him your hea[illegible] I take all the Angels in heaven, and all the Sa[illegible]

abo[illegible]

about the Throne of God, to witnesse, yea, the very stones of these walls, and the timber of this house, and this book in my hand, to witnesse against you, that ye were invited to give your hearts to Christ.

The last consideration is, he that will not give his heart to Christ, believe it, these four things are coming upon him. First, he shal be no more intreated to keep his heart, neither shal he be intreated to give his heart to Christ any more; for the devil shal have it. Secondly, O Atheists, these four things shal overcome you. First, sin it shal have dominion over you: you once delighted mightily in sin; but, alace, it shal be a heavie burden to you in that day. Secondly, the wrath of God shal overcome you: O that shal be a mighty Prince. Thirdly, the devil, and lastly, the lusts of your own hearts, all these shal tread you in the myre. Fourthly, there is this which is coming upon you, O Atheists, *There shal be a sentence of eternal excommunication* pronounced against you which wold not give your hearts to Christ. These blessed & gracious lips that always did delight in speaking good to lost sinners, shal then pronounce that sad & woful sentence against you, *Depart from me ye cursed, I know you not*: The last thing which is approaching unto you, is, the day is coming when you shal be sent away to that prison, out of which there is no redemption: Ye shal be a number of miserable comforters one to another in that day. Ye shal not have a grain weight of comfort for all the joy and pleasure which many of you hath had in a world: *You shal be Physicians of no value, and gnash your tongues for pain*: We would say this unto you, O let the torments of hell, or let the joys of heaven perswade you to give him your hearts: Let the

one constrain you, or let the other terrifie you to this noble dutie of giving him your hearts: and if ye give him not your hearts, ye shal curse the day that ever ye we were born, or that ever there were Prophet amongst you. And ye shal lament that ever ye heard tell of Christ, if ye make not use of him. Now I would only read the text over again, *Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.* But if ye do not keep it with all diligence, out of it shal be the issues of death, ye shal get eternal torments for your reward:

Now to him who can perswade you to give your hearts in keeping to him, and who can anoint your eyes with eye-salve to see your lost estate, to his blessed Name we desire to give praise.

SERMON VI.

Prov. 4. 23. *Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*

THere are two great books which a Christian ought mainly to study, there is God and his own heart: and he would studie to know the unspeakable goodness of the one, and the desperate wickednesse of the other. And we may say, the first time that a Christian turns over the first page of his heart, and looks upon that desperat wickedness which is therein, he might be constrained to cry out, *Wo me, I am undone,* Yea, there is as much wickedness in every ones heart who is here, as might be a quarrel to destroy a whole world, if God would contend with us in his just judgement; I think Christians can never trust their hearts too little, and they can never trust God to much. And have we not receiv-

many proofs of both these? I may say as *Jeremy* said, *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?* O but a sight of the evil temper of our hearts, and a sight of the goodness of God, would make many of us renounce our self-righteousnesse, and our spiritual pride, and admire his transcendent righteousnesse. I think a Christian ought to be as these four beasts which is mentioned in *Rev.* 4. 6. 7, 8. where the four beasts that are spoken of there, may relate to the Ministers of the Gospel, and may also be taken for every real Christian. First, we should be full of eyes before, to wait on Christ and depend upon him, *as an hand maid upon her Mistress*, and not to reflect upon these things that are behind, as to rest upon this according to that word of the Apostle, I *press hard toward the mark, forgetting the things that are behind*, &c. Secondly, a Christian should look to these things that are behind to guard against enemies, and to be much in searching his former wayes to see how much of them hath been given to God, and how much of them hath been given to the devil. Thirdly, Christians should be full of eyes within to examine themselves, and to see their own corruptions. There are many who have eyes without to take notice of other peoples carriage, but they have no eyes to look within to themselves: O would to God that there were fewer markers and observers of other peoples carriage, and moe of the examiners and lookers to themselves, *purifying our selves even as he is pure*. Fourthly, we should be as a Lion in our walk, to point out our boldnesse against the devil and his temptations. Fifthly, we should be like a Calf or an Ox, to point out our laboriousnesse. Sixthly, we should be like the *face of men*, to point out our understanding &

knowledge. Lastly, We should be like a *flying Bird* to point out our heavenly mindedness; all our conversation should be directed by the law of God, all our thoughts and all our actions, and all our words should be conformable to his mind, and as the Bird hath wings, so also ought we to have wings, even as they had six wings, we should have two of them to cover our faces, to point out the reverence which we ought to give to God; & we should have two wings to cover our hands, to shew out the readiness to obey Gods Commandments: and we should have two wings to cover our feet, to point out our imperfections, and the crooked paths we walk into, O christians, will ye study these three following things, and ye will not have so high thoughts of your selves as often times ye have. First, it is through the restraining grace of God, that those grievous sins which ye commit, comes not up to the perfection of *Adultery, Sodomy and Incest*. Secondly, There is no sin which ye commit, but there is some secret inclination to it, although ye think ye hate it much.

Thirdly, it is impossible for you to comprehend, take up, and remember those iniquities that ye have committed since ye were born, as *David* is convinced *Psal.* 51. 2. *Cleanse me from my sin*, &c. which we conceive to be not only from his known sins, but from his sins which he had forgotten; and therefore he bids God make them known unto him, and I would say this to you, *David who was a man according to Gods own heart*, he knew not the number of his sins; & O how much less can we that never came the hundred part so far! And also you may see it in the practice of *Job*, *how many are mine iniquities, and sins, make me to know my transgression and my sin*.

Now we come to the words, and there is to [illegible] things

four things which we spoke to from them at the last occasion: First, The duty commanded, *Keep thy heart*. Secondly, The qualification how this duty of keeping the heart should be gone about, and it is *with all diligence*. Thirdly, That the heart of man hath many temptations seeking it, which is likewise presupposed in that word, *keep thy heart with all diligence*. Lastly, The reasons why we should keep it, *for out of it are the issues of life*. Now for the first thing in the words, we spoke to two things from it. First, That it was a Christians duty to keep his heart, Secondly, What was comprehended under this for a Christian to keep his heart, and likewise of those disadvantages which a christian hath from the not keeping of the heart. Now for the first thing, to wit, that it is a Christians duty to keep his heart; We shal speak yet to some considerations to perswade you to this duty.

The first consideration is, take notice of the bad qualifications of the heart, and there is six or seven bad qualifications of it. First, The heart is exceeding deceitful, Jer. 17. 9. *The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it*, and likewise, *Isaiah* speaks of a *deceived heart* which leads people aside. *Isa* 44.20. The heart of man is a deceitful thing, it will preach *peace, peace*, when there is none. O it is deceitful, it will make us commit sin when there is no outward pleasure therein. Secondly, That *the heart is desperately wicked, who can know it?* that is, if there were threatnings, commands, promises, and convictions of sin, yet the heart will cause you to sin, if hell were put in your way, yet for the pleasure of an idol, ye would run to the sin. Thirdly, that there is a cursed union betwixt the heart and its *Hos.* 4.8. *And they set their heart on their iniquity.* Hos.

4. 17. *Ephraim is joyned to his Idols, let him alone.* And that word is thrice repeated, *Ezek.* 14. 3. 4. *They have set up their idols in their hearts.* Keep your hearts with all diligence, I say, lest that unless be entertained. Fourthly there is many of our hearts that is exceeding mad, *Eccles.* 9. 3. *The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead.* Alace, there is nothing but madness in our hearts according to that word, *the land is full of Images and they are mad upon their idols.* Certainly the madness of our hearts speaks that we keep not our hearts. Fifthly our hearts are divided, as in *Hos.* 10. 2. *Their hearts is divided.* &c. which speaks a great necessity of keeping our hearts. Sixthly, Our hearts are exceeding whoorish, *Ezeck.* 6. 9. *Because I am broken with their whoorish hearts which hath departed from me,* &c. Lastly, Our hearts are exceeding dull and ignorant in the wayes of Godliness as in *Eph.* 4. 18. *Having the understanding darkned being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindnesse of their hearts.* There is such an Egyptian hardness upon our hearts, that we cannot know sin, there is some of us (that I fear) knows not good by evil.

The second consideration is, there is such a difficultie to keep our hearts, therefore we ought strongly to guard them. *Adam* had his heart but a short time in keeping, and yet he could not keep it; which shews the difficulty in keeping of it, *Psal* 25. 10. *O keep my soul and deliver me, let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in thee.* 1. Pet. 4. 19. *Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator;* I would say to you, pray that

prayer

prayer which Christ prayed when he was upon the crosse, *Father into thy hands I commit my spirit.* O pray this prayer every day, for I say if God forsake us but one hour, O what a great multitude of sins would we commit, *Act.* 5.4. *Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God*, yea even to God, who is the Judge of all, as if he had said, it was conceived in thine heart, and then it was brought forth,

The third consideration is, That the heart is the mother and original of all evil; and if this were believed, no doubt we would watch with much watchfulnesse and serious self-examination, likewise I wold say, that the not keeping of our hearts, is the cause of many of our walking so prophanely as we do; It is impossible for you to walk with God aright, if ye have not your hearts keeped; if ye would keep a good conversation, then keep your hearts, for ye must never at any time trust your hearts, for either one time or another they will turn enemies unto you.

The last consideration is this, it is a most excellent thing for a Christian to keep his heart, would ye win to that commendation that *Solomon* hath, *Pro.* 16.32. *He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city*, O then keep your hearts, as if he had said, it is better to conquer that *Medicum*, and little things the heart, than it is for one to conquer a city.

Now, the second thing that I would speak to from keeping of the heart, is to these disadvantages which is waiting upon the not keeping of it. *Prov.* 25. last verse, *He that hath not rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.* And I would give you these disadvantages which will attend upon these that doth not keep their hearts. First a temptation will soon overcome that person with lits

lit e difficulties; the devil will not need to use
arguments for the gaining of that persons heart:
our hearts (many of them by all appearance)
the devils hands, and that he hath a surer grip of
then we our selves have. Oh, that the devil sh
have so many of our hearts, and that so many of
should be at his command! O believe it, he is
hardest master, and he is the worst master that ever
served, and if he once get us within his grips, it
be hard getting out again. These hearts which are
keeped, is all put through other with confusion,
a ruinous city, that wanteth government. Believe
ye cannot do God a greater service then to keep y
hearts well, and the devil would count it a gr
courtesie done to him, if ye wold resign them to hi
therefore, see which of them ye will obey. Fourthly
If ye would consider and look what a thing the he
of man is, O ye would guard it more then ye d
for it is alwayes besiedged with the lusts which
devil sets before your eyes; and there is three lu
which the devil doth besiedge you with, and be su
they shall all overcome you if ye keep not your hear
First, *the lust of the eye*; O but that lust hath brou
many to his obedience! Secondly, *The lust of*
flesh? O that hath overcome many; and thirdly
The pride of life; O to think how these three enemi
hath taken many captives.

Now the next thing which I shal insist a little u
on, is, to point out some marks and evidences whet
ye have kept your hearts or not.

First, if ye have keeped your hearts aright, y
will endeavour to crucifie vain thoughts: Are the
not some here that never knew what it was to crucif
and crush vain and idle thoughts; this was an ev
object that *David* kept his heart, *Psalm* 119. 3
bast

hate vain thoughts, but thy Law do I love. There is some that repents for outward breakings out of sin, but not for secret sins in their hearts, and be sure these never keeped their hearts. Did ye never read that, *Mat.* 5. 8. *Blessed are the poor in heart?* Your sanctification shall never grow so long as ye lodge vain thoughts within your breasts. *O Jerusalem! how long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee,* saith the Lord? Be carefull to think upon such thoughts as ye may answer for one day to the Lord, for your mid-night thoughts shal be read in the hearing of angels and men. O would ye not be ashamed and loath your selves, if ye would consider these vile and vain thoughts that lodge within many of you.

Secondly, These hearts that is not kept, they imbrace tentations so soon as they are assaulted by them, and they do not take notice that they are temptations, and that is a mark of one that keeperh not his heart, that takes not notice of the devil till he hath shut his temptation within his breast: this is clear that *David* kept not his heart when the devils temptations did so assault him, *2 Sam.* 11. & got such a victory over him; and it is also clear in the practice of *Peter*, when he denied his Master thrice, it was a token that he keeped not his heart well.

The third *Evidence* of one that keeperh not his heart, is, he will commit sin with much deliberation; many of us commit sin after we have been thinking long upon it: hence it is spoken *that there is some that studies iniquity upon their beds, and when it is light they put it in practice, Mic.* 2 1. and likewise in *Prov.* 6. Amongst these heinous sins that is odious an hateful to God: *Wicked imaginations* is reckoned amongst the midst of them, *ver.* 18. I say

ye who sin with much deliberation, ye have l[ost] much of the fear of God; for to sin with delibera[tion] on or advisement, is more than to sin against ligh[t]

The foruth mark of these that doth not keep [their] hearts, they sin with much willingnesse and pleasu[re] *Ephraim* willingly worshipped the Calves of *Dan* & *Bethel*. Are there not some here, whose hearts [are] following their Idols, and posting hard after them? But O can your Idols do you any good, and purchase pleasure to you one day! and be sure of this; that who sin with such willingness and pleasure; that is clear evidence that they keep not their hearts well.

The fifth *Evidence* of a heart which is not keeped is, when a Christians heart can mis-regard opportunities, in which opportunities communion with God may be attained, it is a token that the Brides heart was not keeped, when she would not rise and open to Christ.

The sixth *Evidence*, when the heart takes not up the motions of God towards it, that is a token that that mans heart is not well keeped who cannot take up Gods motions: but a Christian whose heart is keeped, he can take up the motions of the Spirit, this is clear if you compare the second and third Chapters of the *Songs* together.

Lastly, ye may know whether your hearts be keeped or not, and that is, when ye do not discern the decayes of the graces of the Spirit within you. There are four graces by which a Christian may know whether he keeps his heart or not. First, If the grace of prayer decay. Secondly, Tenderness. Thirdly, Faith. Fourthly, Love. O therefore I would desire you to try your graces what condition they are in, lest ye go down to the grave with a mistake in your bosom. Now I shal shut up our discourse with speaking to our things.

First, a Christian ought to keep his heart constantly: The hypocrite hath a sort of keeping of his heart, but he keeps it not so constantly as a real Christian. And there is five times when especially he keeps it, the first time is, when he is under afflictions and crosses, then he will not let his heart wander from the wayes of Gods commandements, and he will keep his heart mightily at that time. Secondly, He will keep his heart at that time when convictions are sharp and strong upon him. *Act.* 2. 37. *When they were pricke in their hearts, they cryed out, men and brethren, what shal we do?* amongst which we may conceive there were sundry Hypocrites. The Hypocrite thinks to win through the world, under the notion of a real Saint; but believe it, although he would win through the world under this notion, (as many doth) yet the day is coming when ye and your practice shal be put to the touch-stone. The third time when the Hypocrite would keep his heart, is, when he is going to the Sacrament of the Communion; but when he is come from it, he will take no notice of his heart any more; and the only reason that he keep his heart then, is, that he may have peace with a natural conscience, yea, I fear, if we were all searched, it would be known that the most end we pray for, is to satisfie a natural conscience, & not to please God. The 4. time when a hypocrite will keep his heart, is under sickness & diseases, yea any grosse one will keep his heart in sickness, they who never prayed (almost) will pray at that time. The last time when he will keep his heart, will be when he is called to some publick holy work, as if he were called to pray amongst Christians. O then he will keep his heart diligently! and if he be in a Ministers sight, he will keep the Sabbath day; but alace, these men

doth

doth not remember that a greater one than a
ter sees them; even God the Lord. A by
will keep his outward man, but not his inward
he will not swear, but in his heart he will curse
he will keep his feet outwardly, but inwardly
commit adultery in his heart; If ye would be si
you must mortifie your invisible idols as y
your visible idols.

The second thing that I would say, is this, i
keep your hearts, and not resign them freely to
although ye were to live eighty years, and if ye w
pray the one fourty & weep the other fourty of
years, (if such a thing could be possible) yet all
pains should be for nought, if ye do not freely
give him your heart, for you shal get that fearful
tence pronounced upon you, *Depart from me you*
sed, I knew you never? O therefore while it is ca
to day, give God your hearts: Psa. 78. 56.
they tempted and provoked the most high God, &
nor his testimonie, Psal. 34 16. *The face of the Lor*
against them that do evil, to cut off the remembr
of them from the earth. If ye had the tongue o
angel to speak and pray, yet if ye give him not y
hearts all your prayers shal return back empty to y

The third thing which I would say to you, is th
the heart of man is a thing which ye will find a gr
difficulty to keep, and this is a proof of it, tha
Christian will even sometimes change in prayer.
will sometimes change four times. First, When
begins, he will be in a frame of love to God.
secondly, he will fall secure. And thirdly, He w
have terrible thoughts of God. And lastly, (ere
he have done) he will speak to God as to his co
passion, and I would pose all of you that are
if ye have not been in all (or most part) of th

frame

mes when you have been praying? Now I would rge you (as ye will answer to Christ one day) t) that ye would give him your hearts; there is e words which I would say to you, and O that ye ould consider upon them, Christ comes and sayes us first, *take up thy Cross and deny thy self, and low me*: That is Christs first word unto a Believer, d O but that be a great mystery to flesh and blood, nd the Devil comes and sayes the second word, hich is, *fall down and worship me and I will give thee Kingdom*. The first word of the Devil, is ay the rest word that ye shal get, & the first of Christs is sharpest. Now which of these two offers will ye use? I would only say these two words to you, First ink ye not shame to refuse Christ so openly as ye do? condly, That the answer which ye give him, is not e answer which he seeks, I say one day ye shal be ought before his throne waiting for your condemnation, if ye give not precious Christ your hearts; ye al stand before his Tribunal to receive your last & rful doom: O man, & O woman, with what face ilt thou stand, and what wilt thou have to say when ou stands before him? I remember the word of a rsed Emperor who had made defection from Christ, e was forced to breath out his last words thus sadly, *Thou hast overcome me at last, O Galilean*. So he is oo strong a party to thee to contend with, and at ength he will overcome thee.

Now the last thing that I would say unto you is, you do not give him your hearts; (I as the Ambassador of Christ) declare to you, that Christ and u shal fight together! Put on your harness, t on your Steel coat, (for Christ will be ready r you) and boast when ye put off again. And I ould say this unto you, that it is impossible for

you

you to take Christ except ye get a sight of Chri
his beauty, and if you saw him in his beauty, ye w
say, I'le take him although I get not a Kingdom
the Angels and glorified Spirits of just men
made perfect, may wonder at us why we stan
so long? Oh, Will you give to another your h
and not to precious Christ, who hath given y
heart, and who is worthy of all your hearts?
you look upon that noble plant of renown, an
give him your hearts? who had a hole made
side through which ye may see his heart? Oh
and Oh woman? Why will ye not give Chris
hearts? what shal ye say, when Christ shal sa
to you, why would ye not sincerely give me on
in your life time? Secondly, Why would you
give me your hearts? I will tell you three t
which will be very terrible for you (O atheists
that day when you shal appear before Gods Trib
First, the hearing of the Gospel: Secondly, Whi
more terrible, the Resurrection of Christ: La
Which is terrible of all; when that fearful son
shal be pronounced against you, *Depart, Depart*
then you shal curse the day that ever ye were bor
Glasgow or in *Scotland*? Now O you inhabitan
this place, I charge you (as ye shal answer one d
God) that ye would give him your hearts in keep
and in so doing, ye shal have life eternal: O th
fore, *Kiss the Son by the way lest his anger break*
and you perish for ever; Now to him who can
swade your hearts to imbrace him, we desire to
praise.

SERMO

SERMON VII.

ov. 4. 23. *Keep thy heart with all dili-*
gence, for out of it are the issues of life.

Here is a great and vaste difference betwixt the heart of a Christian while he is on earth, here low, travelling in these Tents of mortality; & the rt of a Christian when he shal be above, taking his Eternal possession in those blessed and ever-ling Tents of immortality; And O, is it not a stery for you to believe that such a day is ap-aching when those hearts of yours which have n so unstedfast in the wayes of godliness, that they l once be *made as pillars in the house of your God, more to go out?* we may compare the heart of a ristian (while he is here below) unto *Reuben*, it is *stable, as water which doth marre its excellency*; r a Christian (while he is here below) he is like moon, changeable, & subject to many vicissitudes, t when he shal be above, he shal be as the Sun, *ha-ing the light of seven dayes*; and is not this a myste-for you to believe that such a day is approaching, hen these hearts of yours, that have wearied so ch in the service of God, to whom prayer hath n a cross, to whom the worshipping of God in the blick ordinances hath been a burden; I say, is it not a stery for you to believe that such a day is approach-, *when ye shal serve God night and day without any arying*: There is not such a voice heard in heaven this, *this is a hard saying who can hear it?* If it re possible that ye could ask that question at *Abel*, he desire to change his estate, or is wearying to do od service (he who of all the lost posterity of *Adam*

was

was the first inhabitant of heaven) he would
to return an answer to such a question, it being
out all ground or reason: And is not this a
for you to believe that such a day is appro
when these hearts of yours that are now
much darkness, such misconstructions of God
misconceptions of the holy Majesty of God,
great mysteries of the kingdom of heaven: I
not a mysterie for you to believe that such a day
preaching when your hearts shal be fully
comprehend those depths, and profound secrets
Kingdom of God, when the most brutish and
est understanding that shal be made to resolv
question and mysterie, how there can be in one
how one can be in three; They shal then be
resolve that profound mysterie of the two natu
the person of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ;
that day your hearts shal be able to comprehen
blessed union that is amongst the Persons
blessed Trinity; and likewise in that day ye
able to take up that blessed knot of union w
betwixt Christ and Believers: And is not this
stery for you to believe that such a day is appro
ing, when your hearts that hath been under suc
ercise of sorrow, that they shal be cloathed
the garment of joy and praise? And I would
se you, O what a robe must that be, to be clo
with the garments of praise? It is a more exc
and glorious robe then all the robes of the
Kings and Emperours of the world. Did you
ever see such an excellent garment, as the garm
praise? There is a three-fold cloathing w
Christian shal put on when first his heart shal
into heaven, in that blessed day of the resurre
First, he shal be cloathed with the robe of the

ss of Christ, and, O what must such a robe
s be? Secondly, he shal be cloathed with the
and garment of immortality; and, O what a
and resplendent garment shal this be! And
y, in that day when first a Christian shal enter
heaven, he shal be cloathed with the garment of
e; and O what an excellent and glorious robe
ll these be? *When yo shal be brought to the King
yments of needle work, and shal be made all glo-
within?*

t the last occasion when we spoke upon these
ds, we told you that there was four things con-
ed in them; and the first was a duty imposed
n Christians, that they should keep their hearts,
second thing was, that there is many spiritual e-
ies who studies to gain and conquer our hearts,
ch is presupposed in these words, *Keep thy heart.*
e third thing is the qualifications which should
nnexed to this precious & soul concerning dutie,
den forth in these words, *Keep thy heart with all
gence*, or as the words may be rendered, with
keeping, or above all keeping. The last thing which
s contained in the words, was, the spiritual ad-
tages, which attends the exercises of that dutie, or
reasons enforcing the dutie, *for out of it are the
es of life*, that is the grouud on which a Chri-
n should walk in perswading himself to the doing
this duty. Now as for the first thing, viz. the du-
commanded, that we should keep our hearts: We
e spoken several things from it, now there are on-
ive things which vve vvould speak to.

First, a Christian should study to keep his heart
m the predominant lusts which dwells in it; it is
the concernment of a Christian to keep him-
from al iniquities, but it is of the special concern-
ment

ment of a christian to keep his heart from his [illegible]
minant sins; this was the practice of *David*, *Ps.*
23. *I have kept my self from mine iniquity*, wh[illegible]
conceive to be understood of his predominant [illegible]
There is not an idol or lust which a Christian [illegible]
in his heart, but he ought to offer it up to God [illegible]
to put a knife to the throat of his most pleasant [illegible]
I will tell you of five great idols which a Chri[illegible]
hath no will to quite, and it is impossible for h[illegible]
keep his heart till he quite them. First, a Chri[illegible]
hath no will to quite his religious idols, th[illegible]
those idols, the loving of which is a commanded [illegible]
but the immoderat love of which is an idol: a[illegible]
instance, it is a great difficultie for a tender *Abra*[illegible]
to put a knife to the throat of his only son *Is*[illegible]
or for Parents to be denied to their children, [illegible]
for a husband to be denied to his wife, the lovi[illegible]
which is their duty, but the immoderate lov[illegible]
them is sin. Secondly, a Christian hath ill wi[illegible]
quite his advantagious idol, that idol in pursu[illegible]
which, he conceives there is outward advantage [illegible]
waiting upon it: as for instance, it is a great [illegible]
cultie to perswade a covetous man to be denie[illegible]
his riches. O but that divinity which is in *Prov.*
4: It is the divinity which the most part (o[illegible]
least many) of the Christians now adayes, doth [illegible]
study to close with or obey; *Labour not to be* [illegible]
&c. There is a greater easiness and facilitie for [illegible]
to quite his pleasant idols, then to quite his ad[illegible]
tagious idols; as for example, a covetous pe[illegible]
will sooner forsake his lusts nor his riches. Third [illegible]
christian hath ill wil to quite his invisible idols, [illegible]
idols that doth lodge within his heart, there [illegible]
great easiness for a Christian to quite his visible [illegible]
to quite his invisible idols; Sometimes a person [illegible]

ke his drunkenneſs and curſing; which will not
e his pride and luſt, but it is of your concern-
, to be as much taken up in the mortification of
ible idols, as in the mortification of viſible ſins.
Fourthly, a Chriſtian hath difficulty to quite
idols which he hath a natural inclination unto,
es the love which we have contracted to ſome
minant idols, by the reaſon of the conſtitu-
mans body; there is ſome that hath a natural
ation to one idol more than to another; and
ear this, I would ſay this unto you, I pre-
ſe ſome under theſe three predominant luſts.
hat there is ſome under the predominant idol of
to the world. 2. That there is ſome under the
ominant idol of pride. 3. That there is ſome un-
he predominant idol of luſt, that is the idol that
have moſt natural inclination unto; affectedly
have greateſt unwillingneſs to mortifie that idol.
hly, a Chriſtian hath much difficultie to morti-
hat idol, the forſaking of which hath great
ard diſadvantage waiting upon the forſaking
ſs, as that young man in the Goſpel, he could
endure that doctrine, *Go and ſell all thou*
, *and give it to the poor*, &c. That was an i-
which had much diſadvantage (as he conceiv-
) attending upon the forſaking of it; ſo that he
d not imbrace ſuch a doctrine, but it is ſaid, *He*
away ſorrowful, &c. curſed be that perſon which
h away ſorrowful, when Chriſt and an idol is put
e ballance together, and whoſe hearts conſents
r to take the idol than Chriſt: I would only ſay
by the way to you. Are there not many here,
if they would tell that which is their practice,
might condemn themſelves for this, that ab-
and diſtance with Chriſt was never ſo great a
burden

burden to their spirits as the want of the a
joyments and fruition of an idol: and doth n
speak that ye prefer your idols before Christ
this man but Barrabas, is the cursed divinity of
of your hearts.

The second thing which I would speake to y
this, a christian should not delay to give obe
to this precious and soul concerning comm
keeping his heart: I know there are some tha
not simply deny obedience to this command, bu
postpone the giving obedience unto it untill
ther time. I would only say this to such, *Bo
of to morrow, for ye know not what a day will
forth*: if ye keep not your hearts to day, it w
a great difficulty for you to keep them to mo
therefore follow the practice of *David*, *I made
and delayed not to keep thy commandements*, Psal.
60. Amongst which we conceive he made haste to
this commandment of keeping his heart.

Thirdly, We would say this unto you of the
of keeping your hearts, if ye wold keep your he
right, ye must entertain these four noble and exc
guests within your hearts, otherwise there w
great difficultie for you: yea an impossibility fo
to keep them. The first guest that must be dw
in your hearts is our blessed lord Jesus Christ, he
dwell in your hearts by faith. Secondly, the
of God must dwell in your hearts by love;
once ye hide his word in your hearts, th
would be helped to keep your hearts, an
with much advantage and gain. Thirdly, if ye
keep your hearts, the love of God must dwell in
and if these were, indeed, your attaintments, t
might pronounce that sentence upon, you, *Th
of God that passeth all understanding, shal ke*

[illegible]garison) *you hearts and minds in Jesus Christ.*
[illegible] Ye should keep the fear and dread of God within
[illegible] hearts, Study to live under the divine apprehen-
[illegible] of the Omnipotent Majesty of God: we conceive
[illegible] little taking up of the Omniscience of God, of
[illegible] Omnipotency of God, and of the terrors of God,
[illegible] a great and especial influence upon your neglect
[illegible] duty of keeping your hearts.

Fourthly, There is this which we would speak
[illegible] this duty of keeping the heart; and it is this
[illegible] shal propose several things that ye wold endeavor
[illegible] all means, to keep your hearts from them. First,
[illegible] Christian would study to keep his heart from the
[illegible]eits thereof, and from these strong delusions that
[illegible]peaks: This is the great mysterie of Iniquity, that
[illegible] our hearts will deceive our own hearts, and
[illegible]ly to bring them to ruine: *Take heed ye deceive*
your selves, &c. saith Jacquias, or as the word
[illegible]y be rendered, take heed ye deceive not your souls
[illegible] *Let no man deceive himself, &c.* & Gal. 6.
Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for what a man
[illegible]th that shal he also reap. It is certain there are
[illegible]y soul-destroyers, and self deceivers amongst us;
[illegible]r hearts speaks peace to them, when there is no
[illegible] to them from God; and in speaking to this, that
[illegible]hristian should keep his heart from the deceivings
[illegible] own heart, I shal speak a little to two things. 1,
[illegible]t are these deceits that lodge in the heart of man
[illegible] And there is this first deceit of the heart of man,
[illegible] most sinful thing that can be; we can put a favo-
[illegible] title & name upon it, & there are few sins which
[illegible] are lying under, but they can put a favorable title
[illegible] them; Do not many call their presumptions
[illegible]? Are there not many that call security peace?
[illegible] there not many that call passion zeal? Are there

not many that call their lukewarmness, and in[illegible]
rency in things of Godliness, their spiritual [illegible]
dom? and are there not many that call their mis[illegible]
humility? Are there not many which call their [illegible]
prodigality mortification to the things of a [illegible]
And likewise, are there not many which call [illegible]
worldly mindedness, frugality? This was the [illegible]
of *Jehu*, that called his proud loving of a kin[illegible]
zeal: *Come see*, saith he *and behold my zeal* [illegible]
Lord, whereas if he hed spoken the language o[illegible]
own heart he might have said, *Behold my zeal* [illegible]
myself.

Secondly, There is this deceit of the heart of [illegible]
that the most excellent and choise things of God, [illegible]
heart, can put an unpleasant name & construction [illegible]
on them; as for instance, are there not many who [illegible]
rendernesse hypocrisie? and are there not [illegible]
who call humility of spirit stupidity? and are there [illegible]
many who cal zeal for God rashnesse? This wa[illegible]
cause that caused *Ahaz* fall, he called believi[illegible]
God, tempting of God: *I will not tempt God* [illegible]
he, while in the mean time he was presse[illegible]
faith in God; it is a cursed practice in the hea[illegible]
many, they put a false tub upon godliness, and [illegible]
then to flee from it just like the practice of the [illegible]
they put a *scarlet robe upon Christ and then mocked* [illegible]

There is this third deceit of the heart of man [illegible]
he doth present as impediments and diversions [illegible]
[illegible] us from the exercise of duty, I would pose ye [illegible]
Christians, when went ye to duty, but there [illegible]
something that your hearts proposed a diversion [illegible]
the exercise of that duty? this is clear, *Prov.* [illegible]
23. *The sleathful man saith, There is a Lion* [illegible]
may, a Lioness in the streets: he presents to him [illegible]
imaginary impediment to divert him from his [illegible]

ich words points out the folly of the excuse, seeing
re uses not to be Lions in the streets nor in the
h wayes; they frequenting more in solitary and de-
t places; this is also clear in *Song* 5, 3, where the
nal and secure heart of the spouse, when she is
ed to open to Christ, she presents this impediment,
ave put off my coat; how shal I put it on? I have
ed my feet, how shal I defile them; I shal only
speaking of these impediments, which our cursed
arts doth propose to divert us from duty, instance
m in the exercise of prayer, that our heart doth
opose several impediments to divert us from that
cious and soul-concerning duty of prayer, and I
l name five impediments which our cursed and car-
l hearts doth present to hinder us from that duty
er God hath presented to us a golden opportunity
doing of the duty.

First, our carnal heart doth propose this impedi-
nt, O say ye, I am not in a praying frame, and so
nst desist from this duty of prayer at this time. I
uld say to such that desist from prayer, because
y are not in a praying frame, these two words. First
o ye suppose the way to attain to a praying frame
to desist from prayer? should ye not go to prayer,
t ye may be helped to win a praying frame. 2.
ye never go to prayer but when ye are in a pray-
frame? I suppose ye pray not once in a week then
it is much if ye pray once in a month, if ye pray
t but when ye are in a praying frame.

The second impediment is, our hearts tells us, it will
more advantage not to pray, than to pray [illegible]
s, a Christian will be under that conviction [illegible]
doth more offend God in prayer than in [illegible]
prayer, and upon that accompt we do fold [illegible]
s, and neglects this dutie. First, I would say this

to such, it it indeed a sad and afflicting thing, [illegible] offending of God so much in prayer, but it is [illegible] sadder to give over prayer. Secondly, I would say [illegible] to such, I can hardly believe that ever ye can offe[illegible] God so much in prayer, as by the total neglect of [illegible] duties.

There is this hard impediment which our he[illegible] doth propose to divert us from duties, and especi[illegible] from the exercise and duty of prayer, we argue [illegible] with our selves, we are not under the sensible neces[illegible]ty of what we need; and so we say, we will not go [illegible] God at this time, for if we pray under such a case [illegible] will turn but complementers with God, we will [illegible] flatter him with our mouth, and lie to him with [illegible] tongue. I would say this to such, the best way [illegible] bring up your hearts to the sensible conviction [illegible] your necessity, is to be much in the exercise of pr[illegible] a Christian must pray for sorrow of sin, if he w[illegible] it, a Christian must pray for sense of necessity, i[illegible] want it; and a Christian must pray for tender[illegible] when he wants it. Prayer is the universal messen[illegible] which we must constantly send to God for the sup[illegible] of all our necessities: There is not a case whi[illegible] Christian can be in, but prayer may go to God [illegible] messenger for a remedy to such a case, when he sta[illegible] in need.

The fourth impediment which our carnal he[illegible] proposeth to divert us from prayer, is, our hearts [illegible] not under one right majestick apprehension of G[illegible] and so ye say, if we go to prayer at this time, we [illegible] be guilty of the third command, *in taking his [illegible] name in vain*; If we go to prayer at this time, [illegible] our deceiving hearts, we will but run our selve[illegible] that sin, *to speak to God as to our companion*, I co[illegible] it is a sad thing to go to God without some d[illegible]

expression of his soveraignty, and Majesty; and I would say this to you, I think it is one of the most sad & undeniable evidences of the little grace of God which is in the hearts of many, that constantly in their prayers they speak to God as to their companion; but I would ask this question at you, When were ye to prayer but ye might find your hearts short-coming in the due apprehension of the Majesty of God.

The last impediment which our carnal hearts doth propose to divert us from the exercise of prayer, is this. We say (many of us) that it is an inconvenient time for the exercise of this duty, therefore our hearts saith, that we should delay the time of praying till a more convenient season, according to that practice in Mag. 21. 2. *The time is not come; the time that the Lords house should be built.* It is the cursed practice of our hearts, that when God presents an occasion to pray, we delay praying at that time under the expectation of a more convenient season for going about that duty; just like that word which *Felix* spoke to *Paul*, we speak that to our occasions; O occasion that is presented to me to pray in, *Go away at this time, and at a more convenient occasion I will call for thee again*: I would say this to these which doth so much slight the opportunities presented to them to pray: I wold only say these three words unto you who doth so; First, what know ye, even ye which slight the call of God to go about prayer? What know ye? I say, one that may be the last call from heaven that ever ye shal get to pray? I would have Christians, and all of you that are here, meditating upon this, that when occasions is presented to you, ye might argue thus, with your selves, I must imbrace this occasion, for I know not but this may be the last occasion.

Secondly, I would say this to you which slights occasions to pray, when the next occasion is told to you, ye will be more unfit for the exercise prayer; and when the convenient time that ye propose to your selves is come, ye will then defer till another time. Thirdly, I would say this to you who slights this golden opportunities that are presented to you to pray in, know this for a certain the slighting of occasions is a disobedience to commandment of God, would ye know what occasions to prayer they are even Gods call, inviting you to go about that duty, and if you slight that occasion the call of God is slighted by you.

There is this fourth deceit of the heart of man which we would presse you to study to shew you, it is, the heart of man studies by all means to excuse sin, and make it seem little when it is not so, this one of the great deceits of the heart, according to that of Solomon, *So is the man that deceiveth his own heart*, and he will add that as an excuse, *was I but in sport?* I will tell you three great faults which are incident to Christians. First; there are some that look upon their perfections through a muliplying glasse, their perfections appear to be more then they are, the Church of *Laodicea* was guilty of this fault supposing her self to have attained to much perfection and to great length in duties, when indeed she had attained to nothing. Secondly, There is some, that look upon their sins; through an extenuating glasse they are like the unjust Steward, when they owe an hundred Talents, they go and write down fifty. Thirdly, their iniquites which they are convinced of and are forced to charge upon themselves, they seek to extenuate them, and saith, *Is it not a little one?* so they desire it may be spared.

The

The last deceit of the heart is, the heart doth oftentimes preach peace, when there is no peace from God. I am perswaded of this, let all the persons that are within these doors be asked of that question, whether or not they have faith in God, or peace with God? I suppose there are not many, but their hearts would say, they have peace with God: O, that is a damnable deceit of the heart, that oftentimes it preaches peace to a man or a woman, when there is no peace to them from God. I shall only to make this deceit appear more lively in its native colours, lay this of it. First, That it is a most mysterious and strong deceit of the heart that will so speak peace to a man, sometimes the word will speak war to a man, and yet his heart will speak peace to him. And O is not that a mysterious deceit, that I suppose if an Angel from heaven, should preach that doctrine to you, that there is no peace between God and you, many of your hearts would (for all that) preach and speak peace to your selves. And secondly, this makes it a most mysterious deceit, that sometimes your consciences doth declare and preach to you that you are not at peace with God, yet over the belly of that assertion, your hearts will preach peace to you. Thirdly, This makes it a most mysterious deceit, that notwithstanding your lives and conversations, that they testifie to your selves and others that you are at enmity with God, yet your hearts will preach peace to you.

Now the second thing that we would say to you from this, viz. That a Christian should keep his heart from the deceivings of his own heart, and if it is this, ye would mainly guard this, ye would mainly guard against discouragements, this our blessed Lord Jesus presses, *John* 14. 1. *Let not your hearts*

be troubled, &c. And it is clear, this is deho[rted] *Phil.* 4. 6. *Be careful for nothing*, &c. and in [Psal.] 42. 5, *David* doth (as it were) expostulate wi[th his] own soul for being discouraged and cast down. N[ow] in speaking to this, that a christian should guard [against] against discouragements. I shal speak unto two thi[ngs] and the first shal be to the rise of discouragemen[ts] and from whence it doth spring. And secondly, I [shall] speak to some considerations to presse this upon [you] that ye would keep your selves from discouragemen[t].

And first, we conceive that discouragem[ent] it arises from this, when a Christian hath no visible victory over his idols, then his discouragement co[mes] apace upon him: A Christian after long wrestli[ng] with his idols, lusts and corruptions, and hath li[ttle] victory over them, he is prone and readie to draw th[at] sad conclusion, *There is no hope, but that once he sh[all] fall by the hand of some of his idols.*

The second *Rise* of discouragement, is, from Chri[st] withdrawing of the sensible manifestations of h[is] love, and of his presence, *Psal* 30. 7. *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.* And it is clear, in t[he] practice of the disciples, the withdrawing of Chri[st] bodily presence, *it made sorrow to fill their hearts.* I confesse there are not many who are sick of t[his] disease of discouragement under ablence with Chri[st] but however, it hath been the reason of his own dis[-] couragement, when Christ for many dayes had absen[-] ted himself from them.

Thirdly, this is the *Rise* of discouragement, whe[n] a Christian hath no return of his prayers, *Lam.* 3. compared with *vers.* 18. where in *vers.* 8, he cry[eth] out, *When I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer*, and *vers.* 18. he draws that sid conclusion, *my ho[pe] and my strength is perished from the Lord.* The m[an] getting

getting returns of prayer hath been an occasion of much disputing the good will of God and a foundation of much discouragement to his own people.

Fourthly this is the *Rise* of discouragement, when a Christian doth interpret the sad and afflicting dispensations of God, and he conceives that there is nothing but wrath speaking to him therein; then he falleth into a great fit of discouragement, as in *Lam.* 3. 17. compared with *vers.* 18. where the rise of his discouragement was the misinterpreting of the said dispensations of God.

Fifthly, This is the *Rise* of a Christians discouragement, *When he is made to possess the iniquities of his youth. and all the terrors of God seemeth to be called in in a solemn Assembly round about him* Then he taketh on a great fit of discouragement.

Now to that which secondly we shall speak to, is, to propose some considerations unto you to guard against discouragement.

The first shall be this, these that have a heart that is under the spirit of bondage and discouragement they cannot pray as they ought, discouragement makes prayer a most unpleasant duty, as is clear, *Psal.* 77. *I am so troubled that I cannot speak.* Discouragement (as it were) hinders and obstructs the exercise of prayer. Secondly, Discouragement doth exceedingly interrupt the exercise of faith as in *Psal.* 42. 5. *Why art thou cast down O my soul, and why art thou discouraged within me? trust in God, for I shall yet praise him for the health of his countenance.* The Psalmist (as it were) speaks a difference (if not an opposition) betwixt the disquietness and faith. If ye would not interrupt the lively acting of faith, ye would study to guard against discouragement, that ye do not sit down and draw desperate

conclusions against your selves. I know ye may call a Christian *Marah* now; because he is inded under bitternesse; but the day is approaching when we may call a Christian *Noami*, when he shal be comforted with the consolations of God.

The third consideration to presse you to guard against discouragement, is, there is no duty that a Christian is called to when he is under discouragement, but it makes it a burthen to him, according to that word *Jer.* 20. 9. discouragement brought forth that resolution, than I said, I *will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his Name, &c.* A soul that is under the exercise of Faith moves swiftly as the Chariots of *Aminadab*; but a soul that is under the exercise of discouragement, moves as the Chariots of *Pharaoh* heavily.

Lastly there is this consideration, to presse you to guard against discouragement, and it is this, misbelief and discouragement is the mother of Apostacy, as is clear, *Lam.* 1. 8. *she sighed*, and what followeth upon *and turneth backward*, and it is no wonder discouragement grow big with child of Apostacie, because it makes duties become tastelesse.

Now the rest of the things which we would have a Christian keeping his heart from, we shal onely but name them briefly unto you. The third frame that a Christian should keep his heart from, is from an impatient frame, he shold study to make his heart keep silence to any crosse that comes to him from the hand of God. Fourthly, he should keep his heart from a lusting frame, not to be taken up in an immoderate pursuit after the things of the world. Fifthly, he should keep his heart from an untender frame, he would study alwayes to keep his heart tender, that he may have that Divine softness that his heart may

meet

melt: likewise, he is to keep his heart from an unpraying frame, to be at every occasion in a fit temper of spirit, for the duty of prayer. Lastly, he is to keep his heart from a secure frame, alwayes to be upon the watch tower, and wait for the motions of Christ: and there are three things, the motions of which a Christian should take up. First, he should take up the motions of Christ to hear if he can take up the motions of the sound of Christs feet coming over the mountains of *Bether*: Secondly, He should take up the motions of his conscience, that he may not be sleeping when sin awakes. Thirdly, He should take up the motions of the heart, to see what frame he is in; A Christian should be able to write a diurnal of his own heart, that in such an hour of such a day, I was in a believing frame, and in such an hour of such a day I was in a discouraged frame, and in such an hour of such a day, I sought him whom my soul loveth, and in such an hour of such a day he brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love. The summe of all is, if ye would keep your hearts, ye must give Christ them to keep, for that is the best way to keep them well, it is only to Christ ye must commit the keeping of them. Ye know man had but his heart a short time in keeping, and he lost it; and I shal before I close, because it is the great design of the preaching of the Gospel, give you five considerations that may provoke you to give your hearts to Christ.

The first consideration is, will ye consider the matchlesse and transcendent excellency which is in precious Christ; O, doth not that translucent beauty preach, *My son give me thy heart*, Prov. 23. 26. The Psalmist presseth opening to Christ upon this accompt, *Lift up your heads, O ye everlasting doors, and*

gates

gates. And what is the garment wherewith he presses it, *and the king of glory shal come in.* I would ask this at you (O ye hard hearted) is it not marvelous presumption for you to refuse the precious offers of such a glorious King?

The second consideration to presse you to give your hearts in keeping to Christ, take a view & a comprehensive look of the precious acts of the infinite condescentions of Christ: Doth not his coming down from heaven preach that doctrine, *My son give me thy heart?* Doth not his being born under the Law, preach that doctrine, *My son give me thy heart?* And doth not this being born in so lowly condition preach that doctrine, *My son give me thy heart?* And if nothing will perswade you to give your hearts to Christ, ye would take a look of those five wounds which he received in his blessed body: first, doth not the wound that he received in his right hand preach this, *My son, give me thy heart?* Secondly, doth not the wound that he got in his left hand, preach this doctrine; *My son, give me thy heart?* Thirdly, doth not the wound that he received in his precious sides, preach this soul concerning doctrine, *My son give me thy heart?* And likewise doth not the wounds which he received in his blessed legs, preach this doctrine, *My son give me thy heart?* O were ye never constrained to wish for ten thousand hearts, to ware and bestow them upon him? Oh! what hearts have ye, which refuses the offers of so noble and condescending a Prince?

The third consideration is, if ye will look upon these things which intreats you to give Christ your hearts, ye cannot but give them unto him. Christ cryes, O come and give me your hearts, necessity crye, O go and give Christ your hearts; and

we say like will. O give Christ your hearts to keep.

The fourth *consideration* is, Will ye look upon these unspeakable disadvantages which attends those that will not give their hearts to Christ. I would say this by the way, there are two ballances upon which we weigh our hearts. First, some weighs their hearts in the ballance of the Sanctuary, and they are found light. Secondly, some weighs their hearts in the ballance of deceit, and they are found without fault: but now say this to the person which will not give their hearts to Christ, I defy all the Angels in heaven to speak forth their unspeakable disadvantages, yea, sense shal be the best preacher of it in that day: and I shal name these three inexpressible disadvantages to you. First, if ye give not Christ your hearts, Christ shal be your eternal enemies; and in the comparate to that precious doctrine which he once preached, *Come unto me*, he shal pronounce that sad sentence against you, *Depart from me*; and therefore as ye would not ingage Christ to be your eternal enemy, ye would give him your hearts. O, the Gospel vengeance of a crucified Savior, will be more terrible, sad and fearful, then the vengeance of the Law. Christ is the best friend; and the most terrible foe. The second disadvantage is, ye shal be eternally shut out from the enjoyment of the blessed company of Angels, and from the souls of just men made perfect; and O therefore meditate & consider upon this, what it is to be separated from the Father, the first person of the blessed Trinity; and from the Son, the second person of the blessed Trinity; and from the Holy Ghost, the third person of the blessed Trinity; and from all the blessed Society which are in heaven. And the last disadvantage is, ye shall be kept under these everlasting chains,

even

even all of you which will not give your hearts to Christ. If ye be not under this everlasting chain of love, ye shal be under these everlasting chains of wrath. I suppose if the most stout hearted sinner here, if he could but a moment hear the schreighings of the damned (if it were granted to him) he would not delay to give his heart to Christ.

The last *Consider*, is, O consider these infinite eternal and unchangeable advantages that those have which gives their hearts to Christ, we conceive if all the Angels in heaven would preach together upon the unspeakable blessedness of the Saints in heaven, they would alwayes close their sentence with this, It is unspeakable joy which attends those that are admitted to that blessed life. There are five things which are unchangeable to Christians, and five things which are unchangeable to reprobates. There is this first, which is unchangeable to the Saints: (I mean not here their communion with God shall be unchangeable; for after they shal win to heaven, they shal be under a continual and blessed emanation of Christ presence. Secondly, they shal have an unchangeable love. A Christians love while he is here, is like unto the Moon, subject to many vicissitudes and alterations; but afterward when they shal be in heaven, their love shal be unchangeable. Thirdly, His holiness shal then be unchangeable when once he shal put on the robe of Christs righteousness: he shal then sing that song, *O Death, where is thy sting? And O grave, where is thy victory?* Fourthly, prayer to God shal be unchangeable; O what a pleasant sight shal it be to see the souls of just men made perfect with harps in their hands, singing these pleasant songs unto God most sweetly (*Halelujah to him that sits*

the throne, and to the Lamb which lives for ever; their tongue is made like the pen of a ready writer, there is not such a complaint uttered by *Moses* in heaven, I *am a man of slow speech*, neither doth *Jeremiah* now complain, I *am a child and cannot speak*. Fifthly, desires after God shal be unchangeable; a Christian while he is here below, will desire God now, and within a little while he will desire his idols, but then when he shal be above, his desires after God shal be unchangeable.

And upon the contrary there are five things unchangeable in the lot of a reprobate, and of these that will not give Christ their hearts. First, their separation from God shal be unchangeable, when once they shal go down into the pit, there shal be no hope of coming up again: Ah, ye would think upon this, what a life shal it be to be under the eternal excommunication from Christs presence? O but if ye knew Christ, & believed what a one he were, ye would close with him? 2. The reprobate shal have an unchangeable sorrow. O he may be sad when the vengeance of God shal be squizing the marrow out of his bones, and when he is eternally shut up in these horrible flames, & out of them to have no redemption? 3. Reprobates, they shal have an unchangeable hatred against God; and God shal have an unchangeable against them, and I cannot wish a greater misery to any, then for Christ to have an unchangeable hatred against them. Fourthly, ye that are alias from God, ye shal sin unchangeably, ye shal never cease to sin, and ye shal never cease to be tormented; on these two eternity shal be spent. Lastly, Your inward anxiety and tortering of conscience shal be unchangeable, that worm shal never dy; but shal eternally gnaw your consciences.

Now what shal we say more? we have set
and death before you, and whether of them
ye imbrace? O that ye would imbrace Christ,
ven precious Christ, and give over your hearts
that blessed Lord! It is like in these dayes, that
devil hath purchased many Harpers to himself,
sing that song, I *am not far from victory*: the
of a crucified Saviour shall eternally come do
upon the heads of these that will not give
hearts to Christ, and to you that will give
hath given your hearts to Christ, the eternal bles
of Christ shal come upon your hearts. Behold the
incoming (O Atheists) when ye would give
thousand worlds for one invitation of the Go
again; & ye would be content to bide ten thous
years in hell for one preaching, and it shal be
nied to you! O, therefore do not withstand Chr
offers; take him, ye will not get him for a lo
and know that if ye will not love him now,
heart shal burn with hatred against you; and
day ye shall curse your cursed hearts for that hat
ye bare to him. Now to him who intreats you
imbrace his offer, be praise

S E

SERMON VIII.

Micah 6. 9. *The Lords voice cryeth unto the City, and the man of Wisdom shall see thy name, hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.*

IT is a question that is hard to determine, whether the greatness of God, or the condescendency of God be the greatest mystery; but O! when both these are put together, they make up a matchless mystery. What is more dreadful! then power which cannot be resisted? and what is more terrible than a doom from which nothing can be hid? And yet what is more sweet, than the love wherewith he hath loved us, and the unchangeableness thereof which doth cast off all suspicion? I would only say this unto you, God hath been speaking to you diverse wayes and by different things, and as the Apostle speaks, *there are many voices in the world, and none of them is without signification* SS I may say, there is not a voice by which God speaks to you, that needs to be a *Barbarian speaking in an unknown tongue*, I confess it is sad, that when God condescends to speak unto us so many different wayes, that there should be so many which should stop their ears; are there not some to whom Christ hath *piped*, and they have not *danced*? And now he is beginning to *mourn* to you, and oh will ye not *lament*? I would say this to you, the day may be approaching when *Glasgows* Gods shall be preachers, and its crosses Teachers from the Lord. Yea, God is beginning to preach that

word

word to you, which is in Jer. 2. 31. *O Generation see the word of the Lord*, &c. If ye will not hear him God, in the voice and mouth of his Preachers, he will send a more severe Preacher unto you; and ye shall be forced to hear his voice. I say, look that the scourge of Christ in his Rods, in his Ordinances, in his offers, make not the place an *Aceldama*, a field of blood, and a *Golgotha*, the place of dead mens skuls. I say to you, the day may be approaching when ye shal meet with these six silent things from God. First, when ye shal meet with the Rods, when ye shal not know nor understand the language of them, when they shal speak to you in strange and profound language which you shal not understand. Secondly, when ye shal meet with silent God, when ye shal cry to him and he shall not hear you. Thirdly, when you shall meet with silent ordinances, which shal not speak unto you. Fourthly, when ye shal meet with silent mercies, that all the good things he doth unto you, ye shall not know the language of them? Fifthly, when ye shal meet with the sad lot of a silent conscience, that ye shal not be reproved by it, when ye sin, but shall not give you leave to fall and depart, and to return? And lastly, when ye shal meet with silent commands, with silent threatnings, and with silent promises, that is ye shal never know what the promise calls for, what the threatnings calls for, what the commands call for, when he shal cheat you in the dark, and there shal be none to defend you, and when there shal be none to plead your cause but a sin revenging God entering the list with you, when he shal say to them that are left, do not pray for this people, nor intercede for them, for they are the people upon whom I will have no

mercies I may say by all appearance, our judgment doth speak this. He hath spoken to us in the still voice of the Gospel, and he hath spoken to us in the whirlewind, and yet he is in none of them: But what know ye but God may the next time speak to you closing himself in a circle of fire; I have sometimes spoken that word to you. *Awake, awake, O sleepers, and call upon your God.*

But to come to the words, in this Chapter the Prophet hath been leading a sad processe against his people, for the neglect of duties which were lying at the door, and now we have in this verse the conclusion of it, the scope whereof is this, shewing the people that the Lord would send a more sharp message if they will not obey. And in it there are two things considerable.

First, we have an excellent exhortation given to hear the Rod, and by it, is not only meaned to take up what the Rod speaks, but also, *Who hath appointed it.*

Secondly, There is that excellent consideration to presse them unto it, it is *the Lords voice*, we may say that of the rod which was said of Herod in another *sense*, *it is the voice of God and not of man.*

Thirdly, we have the people to whom the Exhortation is given; and it *is unto the City*, that is, to *Samaria*, & to the bordering Towns there about, now the reason why the Lords voice cryeth unto the City rather than to the country, the reason of it is either this, the City ordinarly hath most eminent tokens of the mercies and respects of God, which being abused makes God especially to contend with them, and die because of this; ordinarily most prophanity

is

is broached within the city, and doth vent it
thence into the countrey, according to that
which is spoken of *Jerusalem, that from it pro*
goes out unto the Countrey or whole land.

The fourth thing in the words, is the person
will hear the voice of the rod, the Lords vo
and it is, *The man of wisdom shall see thy Nam*
as the words may be rendered, the man of sub
or of substantial wisdom; which speaks, that
one of the greatest follies that is imaginable no
hear the voice of the Lord and his threatning rod.

The last thing in the words, is the way how
man of wisdom wins to the right use making
understanding the voice of the rod, and it is by see
his Name, now by the Name of God may be e
understood, the seeing of the Authority of Go
his threatnings; or by the Name of God ma
understood, His wisdom, His peace, His power,
justice, His soveraignity, and His holiness, the
of wisdom shall see these five excellent Attributes
God shining into the Rod, and in every sad disp
sition which he meets with, and the reason of u
that expression, *he shall see*, is to point out these c
tain and distinct discoveries which the man of wisd
shall have by such a crosse.

Now having thus made plain the words unto y
there are three things which we shall speak a little u
from the scope, before we come to the first thing
the words.

The first thing which we shall take notice of fr
the scope, is this, That the slighting of known d
is the fore-runner of some sad and lamentable st
from the Lord upon a person or people, these th
which they know to be duties, and yet they sli
and disobey them, I say it is the fore-runner of so

and eminent act of the displeasure of God to a
son or people. This is clear, *Luk* 12.47. *That ser-*
e which knoweth his Lords will, and prepareth
himself, neither doth according to his will, shall be
aten with many stripes. And that word in *Jer.* 5.
I will get me unto the great men, and will speak
o them, for they have known the way of the
d; and the judgement of their God, &c. yet it is
d of these, *they have altogether broken the yoke, and*
st the bonds. And what follows? *verse* 6. *Where-*
re a Lion out of the Forrest shall slay them. Rom 1.
. 26. where they professed themselves to know,
d yet they glorified him not as God. This is given
a reason, *That he gave them up to a reprobate*
nd, to do things not convenient. It is probable the
piety and prophanity of people is come to a won-
rful height, when they can sin against light and
owledge. Now in speaking of this necessity,
hal speak to some aggravations of the sin of slight-
g known duties.

The first *Aggravation* is, when a person slights
ty after the sinfulnesse of that sin hath been dis-
vered unto him, and ingraven on his conscience, O
at is a mighty aggravation of that sin. This is clear
of 5.2. *And the revolters are profound to make*
aughter, though I have been a rebuker of them all.
eb. 9. 29. *and have resisted against them yet they*
ave proudly and hardned not to thy commandment,
t sinned against thy judgements. I confesse, sinning
ainst convictions of conscience (especially when
ey are sharp) is a greater sin then to sin against light;
s is indeed to sin with a lifted up hand, and not to
ush, nor be ashamed, nor yet to be afraid to commit
iniquity. Know now therefore, there are many
ge that slight known duties notwithstanding of light

and

and the convictions of conscience which they [illegible] had for doing so: I would only say to that person, [illegible] raid and stand in awe, lest the day may be appreen[illegible] when God shall cease to be a reprover unto you, [illegible] the reines shal be laid on your own neck, & you [illegible] be as a wild ass snuffing up the wind.

The second *Aggravation* of slighting known [illegible] ties, is when a person slights known duties after G[illegible] hath been discovering discontent with another per[illegible] for that sin, when we see the justice of God overt[illegible] ing another person for slighting of a known duty, & [illegible] the person which stands beside, is not afraid to ye[illegible] in the same sin, this is clear, *Jer.* 3. *And I saw when all those causes whereby back-sliding Israel commit[illegible] adultery, I had put her away, and gave her a bill of [illegible] verce: yet her treacherous sister* Judah *feared not, [illegible] went & played the Harlot also.* And if he had sa[illegible] though Judah have beheld what I have done to Isr[illegible] for her whorish carriage, yet notwithstanding of t[illegible] *she went and played the harlot also.* I confesse thi[illegible] a greater aggravation then the former, and it spea[illegible] that such a sinner (in a manner hath given a defian[illegible] to the justice of God, & hath cryed out (in a manne[illegible] I care not what God will do, I will do my pleasure[illegible]

The third *Aggravation* of the sin of slighti[illegible] known duties, is, when persons slights know[illegible] duties after God hath begun to contend with the[illegible] for so doing, this is a mighty aggravation of sin, a[illegible] clear, in *Isa.* 57. 17. *For the iniquity of his covetou[illegible] nesse, was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me and w[illegible] wroth and he went on frowardly, in the way of his he[illegible]* As when a person hath had the rod shaken over his he[illegible] and hath drunk something of the justice of God [illegible] slighting such a dutie, yet to persist in it, O that [illegible] scarlet and mighty transgression, and yet are there [illegible] many here who are such?

The fourth *Aggravation* of slighting known duties is, when a person slights known duties upon very real temptations, is not this certain, a word of a temptation, the half of a word; yea the very nod of a temptation will put us from the doing of known duties? Yea, sometimes we will be glad of a temptation to divert us from the exercise of duties; yea, sometimes it is known, when temptations are not present to divert us from the exercise of known duties, we wil go forth and seek a temptation, I confesse the devil needs not to be at much pains in these days, there is many which gives the devil work and imployment, yea, and if he seek not them, they will seek him?

The fifth *Aggravation* of the sin of slighting known duties is, when persons does not so much as [illegible] about well doing of them, that is a great aggravation, this is clear, *Luke* 12. 47. *He that knows his masters will, and doth it not, neither doth prepare himself to do it, or worthy of double stripes.* He will not take pains to prepare his heart for duties, that is a mighty aggravation: Some they are content to be under their fetters as though they were bound of God, some they are content to live under their convictions as though it were impossible for them to answer them; and they say there *is no hope*.

The sixth *Aggravation* of slighting known duties is, when a person slights duties after God hath commended the beauty and excellency of such duties; that is, no doubt, great aggravation, as when God hath commend prayer, & discovers the beauty thereof to a Christian, O then it is a sad and lamentable thing for that person to sit down, and slight his duty, that is, (as it were) to slight prayer when it hath all its ornaments:

A seventh *Aggravation* is, of slighting known duties, is when persons slight duties after they have been convinced of the advantage which waits on the doing of them, Are there not some that slight prayer, notwithstanding they have been convinced that prayer hath been to them a mount *Tabor* in which they have seen Christ transfigured? some that slight prayer, after they have been convinced that prayer hath been the tryfting-place betwixt Christ and them, and after they have been convinced that prayer hath been at the top of mount *Pisgah*, on which they have gotten a view of the promised land? this is a notable aggravation of slighting of known duties, when the person hath this to say, Now I am slighting my own advantage!

There is this last *Aggravation*, when a person slights known duties, yet with very little resentment and grief of heart: Are there not many persons that have slighted their morning prayer here to day, yet have not convictions thereof? And are there not many persons here to day, that often times go to bed without saying their prayers, and yet have as much peace of conscience as if they had done it? I think a person hath gone a great length in hardness of heart when he can slight known duties, & yet not be grieved, yea & it is a token that they have not only ill, but a hardned conscience, but with a hardned heart. Are there not many persons that notwithstanding of the slighting of known duties, yet never have been heart therefore? Doth not the misbeliever slight the commandment of faith & yet not weep for it? Doth not the secure christian slight the command-work of prayer, and yet not be grieved for it? Doth not the presumptuous sinner slight examination, and yet is not much grieved? And

the dissolute sinner that is under the power of his
lusts slight the commandement of mortification,
and yet not have a sore heart for it?

Now the second thing which I shal speak from
the scope, is, I shal propose some considerations to
presse you to the exercise of all known duties.

The first consideration, it is the Christian which
practises, and not the Christian which knoweth, to
whom the promises are made: would ye know the
Christian which hath a right to the promises? It is
not the Christian which knoweth his dutie, but it is
the Christian that doth his duty; This is clear in
Matth. 7.21. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord,*
Lord, shal enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that
doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven. I think
the promises had been annexed to the knowledge of
duties; then doubtless *Balaam* had been in heaven; it
is not the knowing Christian, but it is the practising
Christian to whom the promises are made.

The second consideration to press you to the exer-
cise of known duties, it is the Christian that is taken
up in practising, and not the knowing Christian
that is blessed; would ye know the blessed Christian?
it is not he that knows this dutie only, but it is he
which knoweth his dutie and doth it; according to
that word, Joh. 13.17 *If ye know these things happy*
are ye if ye do them. Where ye may see happinesse
annexed to doing, and not to knowing: I tell you
if ye could speak your dutie like an Angel, and if ye
know the smallest comman in Scripture to be a com-
mand lying at your door, yet if ye do it not, ye shal
never be blessed. O, know it, there are many know-
ing persons in hell to day.

The third consideration to presse you to practise it,
is the practising Christian, and not the knowing

Christian that is approven and commended of G
This is clear, *Song 7. 1. How beautiful are thy*
with shoes, O Princes daughter, &c. Christ takes
notice of the Brides feet, which is her practice,
commends her from that; believe it, Christ co
mends a Christians feet more than his eyes, that
his practice more than his knowledge: it is the pra
sing Christian which shal have that word spoken
him in the day of the Lord, *Well done good and fa*
full servant; it is not said, well known good a
faithful servant, but it is said, *well done*, for if y
know never so much, and yet not practise it, Chr
will never commend you.

The fourth consideration to presse you to the d
ing of known duties, it is not the knowledge but
practice of duties which will give peace to a christia
conscience, if ye would know all the comman
ments in the Bible, and yet never do one of them,
is nothing, it is not your knowledge that will gi
your conscience peace, I say this to you, ma y ot
knowing and their fighting of duty, in one day
make their conscience roar like a lion, and they ha
nothing to answer it. I say unto you, O Christian
if ye would have peace of conscience in the gr
and terrible day of the Lord, then practise what
know and desire to know what ye ought to pr
ctise.

The fifth consideration, it is the practice of yo
duty, and not the knowlegde of your duties, by wh
ye rise up in conformi y with God; it is the prac
sing of what ye know, and not the knowledge
that ye should do, that raises you up in conform
with him; if ye know all that ye shold do, & do it no
ye may be strangers to God, in respect of conform
with him, as if ye were never ignorants. I wi
ghe

ere were in these dayes lesse knowledge and more
ctice, or rather I wish there were more knowledge
d practice both together I think the Christians of
s time sins against a witness in heaven, & a witness
gainst their own conscience: I think there are some
but few amongst us) in these dayes that sinneth
t of ignorance, but I would say this, the person
t sins out of knowledge, condemns himself, but
e person that sins out of ignorance, the law con-
mns him.

There is this, thirdly, that I would say to you from
e scripes, I would have you observing these six things
ncerning known duties.

And 1. Many persons are more desirous to know
hat they should do, than to do what they know, some
rsons cry out, *Wherewith shal I come before the*
rd? and the Lord may answer them with this,
ve I not shewed thee, O man.

There is this 2. thing which I would have you know-
ng, the question which shal be propoled to you in
e great and notable day of the Lord; it shal not be,
O man, what knowst thou? But it shal be, O man,
hat didst thou? This shal be the question which
Christ shal put home to you in that day, what didst
hou in thy lifetime, and not what knowest thou in
y lifetime.

3. I would say this, believe it, A grain weight
f sincerity and practice, is worth a talent of know-
dge. it is better to practise as the weakest Christi-
n, than to know as the most excellent angel, not
ractising what we know; Christ weighs not our
race by quantity, but by quality: not by degrees, but
y the truth and reality of them; I say if thou knew
ever so much, a grain weight of sincerity & practice
Gods sight, is more worth then it all: If thou were

as eloquent as *Apollos*, and as wise as *Solomon*, could he speak with as many tongues as *Paul*, a ye knew and understood all mysteries, yet if y not practise your duties, it is all to no purpose.

Fourthly, I would say this, the slighting of kn duties hath many sad disadvantages waiting u them, and I shal name these four unto you. F The slighting of duties, it is that which m Christians weary in duties; is there any person that slights duties at such and such a time, I proph this to thee, thou shalt weary of duties ere long, is clear. *Isa.* 43. 22. *But thou hast not called upon O Jacob, but thou hast been weary of me,* O I r say, slighting of duties, and wearying in duti:s will not be long asunder: Secondly, slighti known duties brings on much hardness and stupi of heart, according to that word in *Nehem.* 9. where disobedience and hardness of heart are together: would you know the reason why so m persons are under so much deadness, and under many bonds? It is because they slight known du Thirdly, The slighting of known duties doth t three things to our conscience. It either mars place of Conscience, or else it hardens the c science. Or thirdly, It suls our conscience as I wonder how many of us can call our selves der, since there is so much slighting of that we ou to do. Are there not many Christians, which soon tell all their privat prayers that they mak God? there is a fourth disadvantage which wait the slighting of known duties, and it is this, Christian who slights duty sometimes, that d which a Christian doth, it is exceeding formal: T are some Christians which slight prayer one day, the second day, and it is one to a hunder but the

y when that Christian prayes, but it be meer for-
lity. O, what makes Christians pray so weakly? Is
because they teach their hearts the art of praying
rmally by slighting of duty.

Fifthly, I would say this to you, the slighting of
own duties in the first step of the sin against the
oly Ghost. This is clear in *Heb.* 10. 26. *For if we sin
ilfully after that we have received the knowledge of
e truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.* I
ll you what is betwext the sin of slighting known
ies and the sin against the Holy Ghost, there is
o more betwixt them both but that word *wilfulness*
d what knows thou, but thy slighting of duties
ay come to wilfulness ere long? Ye would know
e, that under the Law there was Sacrifices for sin
Ignorance, and likewise for sins of *infirmities*, but
ere was no sacrifice for presumptuous sins, now if
is be the first step towards the sin against the Holy
host, I am sure there are some here, which have gone
is length, yea, and *I* fear a little further: Now will
e take home this conviction, and *I* will say this, let
e person which is not guilty of this offence amongst
s take up the first stone and cast at us: I suppose our
onscience might accuse us, and we might steal out
ne by one. O! the dreadful disadvantages
hich attends that person that slights known
ties? This is a strange thing, our consciences
e no more moved at what one can speak of that
hich is our sin indeed, then though it did not
oncern us: I suppose there is not one here, but
ey may write this on their fore-heads, *Guilty*,
Guilty.

Now there is this lastly which I would say unto
en, the day is coming when the slighters of known
ties shal be forced to cry out, Ah, that I had been

an idiot and had never known my duty, I con
the slighting of known duties, and the sinning ag
Light shal be a mighty aggravation of our sin.
what terror was it to *Judas* conscience whe
came to think of this, I *sold* my *Master*,
know, I *have sinned in so doing*? And, O
terror likewise will it be to you, when ye
be convinced of this: my conscience told
that this was my duty, and I would not
it.

Now the next thing which we shal speak to fr
the words in general, is, that God (in the depth
his condescendencie) hath many various waye
making known duties unto a person or people:
is clear from the words, where God having pre
duties upon this people by the voice of his minist
now he sends a more sad & terrible preacher to th
even a threatning rod. Now this is clear, that G
hath many wayes in pressing people to their du
Isai. 5. 4. *What could have been done more to*
vineyard that I have not done in it, &c. Thi
al o eminently clear in *Song* 5. 2. *Open to me*
ster, my spouse. And if that will not do it, he
knock at the door, and say, *it is the voice of my*
loved that knocketh, and if this will not do it, he
ule arguments to perswade her, *Open to my siste*
Is not that an argument? Yet he will give her an
ther; *For my head is filled with dew, and my hair*
the drops of the night: And if all these will not
it, Christ *will put in his hand at the hole of the*
which speaks this, that Christ in the depths of
condescendencie, leaves nothing unessayed to pr
people to their duty, This is also clear, *Deu*
11. 26, 27. 28. where *he set life and dea*
blessings and cursings before them to p
th

them to their duty, I confeſſe there are many in Heaven to day that Chriſt never took the half of the pains on them as he hath taken on ſome of us, and there are many in hell to day, upon whom Chriſt took never half ſo much pains as he hath done on ſome of us, and is it not then a wonder that we are not ſent away to hell likewiſe? now I will tell you ſix great voices or means wherewith God preſſeth people to their duty.

The firſt *voice* is, the voice of threatnings: all the threatnings which is in the Scripture, this is the voice of them all: O give obedience to your duty! This is remarkably clear from that choiſe and remarkable place. *Jer.* 36. *Verſ.* 3. 6 7. *Therefore go thou and read the roll which thou haſt written from my mouth, &c. Baruch* he is commanded to read all the threatnings of God to his people: and what is the precious end he hath before him? *It may be they will preſent their ſupplication before the Lord, and will return every one from his evil way*, &c. This is the very end and ſcope of Gods threatnings, that perſons may preſent their prayers before him, and he will ſhake the rod over our heads for this end. Therefore I ſay, give the threatnings of God (who are his meſſengers) that which they require, and it is, to put the rod by the door.

The ſecond great *voice* whereby God ſometimes preſſeth home duties upon folk, is by the voice and rod of theſe ſad afflicting diſpenſations which we meet with. This is indeed the end of them, that perſons would give obedience to the commands of God: this is clear in the very ſcope, where he preſſeth them *to hear the voice of the rod*, that they might give obedience to their duty. And it is alſo clear from that ſweet and excellent promiſe, *Ezek.* 20. 37.

And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I bring you into the bond of the Covenant. I say very great end and design of God in sending rods that persons may be engaged to their duty.

The third *voice* wherewith God presseth people to their duty, is by the voice of promises, what is the great voice of the covenant of promises? It is, give obedience to commanded duties: This is clear Ezek. 11. 19. 20. *And I will give them one heart and I will put a new spirit within you: and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them an heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep mine ordinance, and do them,* &c. And were all the great promises of the covenant have this promise, *Obey and ye shall have*; it is obedience that leadeth us to the possession of the promises.

The fourth *voice* whereby God presseth persons to the doing of known duties, is, by the voice of all the mercies which we meet with: I say, the voice of them all is this, *O give obedience to his commandments.* Yea, this is the very language of mercies. All the great things which God hath done to you, what is the scope and end of them all? It is, *O will ye come and obey.*

Fifthly, doth not the great voice of our consciences, & of all the convictions which God rooves upon them, do they not say, *O give obedience & obey him with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy strength.*

There is this last *voice* whereby God presses people to the doing of known duties, and it is by the voice of all the publick Ordinances: what is the great voice of all these preachings which we daily preach unto you, but this, *O give obedience to the commands?*

Now I would say this unto you, O people in *Glasgow*, O hath not God spoken to you by all these voices

voices? Hath he not spoken unto you by mercies? Hath he not spoken unto you by threatnings? By the voice of promises? By the voice of the rod? By the voice of our consciences? And by the voice of publick Ordinances? Oh! look that the 26. Chapter of *Leviticus*, be not *Glasgows* plagues? Lord keep this place from Gospel condemnation. *For it is a fearful and dreadful thing to fall in the hands of the living God? yet seven times more, yet seven times more*, I fear, be your plague. Oh! what can God do more to us nor he hath done? Have we not pressed this duty upon you that ye would imbrace Christ, and that this duty might be your delight? If Christ cannot allure us to give our hearts away to him, (in a manner) he will force us to give our hearts to him. I confesse it is sad to slight and disobey the voice of the Rod, God hath two times fearfully shaken the threatning Rod of his wrath over this City of *Glasgow* in a few years, look that so many menacings of Gods Rods be not the fore-runner of some sad stroak from the Lord, Now this is your duty to be hearkning to his voice: this is Christs first word, and is his last word, and it is his best word. O, then take him and imbrace him: I think there is seven steps of judgement which is like to overtake us, if we hearken not to his voice; I say, God hath spoken much, and what can he speak more? And what can he do more? And what can we do lesse to him I say, all the slighting of these threatnings of God, to you they are the fore-runner of these seven remarkable steps of judgement.

The first step of judgement which ordinarly doth befall slighters and disobeyers of Gods voice, is God shall slight their voice when they cry unto him: and what is it any wonder that God stop his ear at all our

prayers? because, is it not known that we stop our ears to his precious invitation and cry, which Christ hath to us, *O take me,*? Therefore I say, O [illegible] Christ your hearts, and then he will hear your voices.

There is a second *step* of judgement which ordinarly befals these who slight these great and precious voices by which God is speaking to us, and it is to be afraid that at last thou come not to this, that thou shalt have no answer from God; that God shall speak no more unto thee; yea, that thou come not to this, that God shal speak his last word unto thee, and have no more to say. I confesse when God goes from preachings to Rods, it is an evident that we are hard to be perswaded. It is sad when he makes the Rods our Teachers, and we will not be taught by them; though, I think, that there were a blessed cross that should make us come to Christ. I think, Christ must do to us, as *Absalom* did to *Joab*, he sent to *Joab*, to come to him, and he came not; *Absalom* then set his corn fields on fire, so that at last he might come. So, I think Christ set our corn fields on fire, that we may be constrained to come to him.

There is this third *step* be like of our judgement, and it is this, I fear, that sad and lamentable word is like to be all us, if we continue to slight this Gospel, *Ezek.* 21. 5. *That all flesh may know that I the Lord have drawn forth my sword out of his sheath, it shal not return any more.* Yea, God hath begun to draw the sword of his Justice out of his sheath, and who knows when he will put it up again? is there any person that hath confidence or perswasion that God will quickly sheath the sword which he hath drawn against us.

The fourth *step* of judgements which lights down upon

upon those that slights the voice of Gods threatning Rod, is that which I think is more sad, *Ezek.* 21. 11. 12. *The sword is sharpned and fourbished that it may glister & that it may make a sore slaughter, that it may be given into the hand of the slayer.* And what know ye but your disobedience to all these voices by which God hath been speaking to you, hath made him to draw his sword and he is to deliver it into the hand of the slayer? and oh, who shal be the slayer, into whose hand the sword shal be delivered.

There is this filthly, which shal be a step of our judgement, if we continue to slight all these voices by which God doth speak to us, and it is that word, *Ezek.* 20. 31. *as I live, saith the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you,* I will cease now to have correspondence with you any more.

There is this six *step* of judgement which may and shal befal us if we thus go on to slight all the voices of the Lord to us; and it is that word in *Ezek.* 24. 13. *I would have purged thee and thou wouldst not be purged, thou shalt not be purged any more, till my fury, &c.*

There is this last *step* of our judgement, which, I think is the cape-stone of all the rest, if we continue in all our slightings of the voices by which God speaks to us. By all appearance there shal be one of these two decrees past in heaven against us. First, either that in *Hos.* 4. 17. *Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone.* Or secondly, that decree in *Rev.* 22. 11. *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still, &c.* I say, *To day if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts as in the day of provocation.* Glasgow is yet within speaking terms to God. O! who knows how long it shal be so? Now if ye will not hear him in the still voice of the Gospel; O! will ye hear him speaking in the whirle

wind

mind? There is nothing that will betall us, wh
will be the cap-stone of our miserie so much as
when Christ shall come and take his farewel. I th
there is few of us who are here, who is within
of Christ; but I am sure there are manie here whi
are within speaking termes to Christ.

Now what doth he require and call for at your
hands? Doth not all the promises in the Covenant
say, O come and take him? Doth not all the Rods
and sad dispensations which we meet with, say, O
come, and take him? Doth not all the threatnings
in the Law, say unto you, O come, and take him!
And doth not all your convictions of conscience
(whereby your need of Christ is discovered) say this
unto you, O come and take him! Are ye not surrounded
about with many voices that cry out this unto
the City, O come, & take him? Therefore, O harden
not your hearts to this pleasant voice. I have only
these seven words to speak to you, and I shall close.

And First, God hath a threefold Rod, whereby he
maketh himself known to people. First, He hath the
Rod of his mouth, whereby he makes known his
word to us. Secondly, there is the Rod of his hand,
and that is affliction and crosses. Thirdly, there is
the iron Rod of his destruction, when God doth
utterly destroy, that destruction shall not rise up the
second time. Now God hath been long speaking to
you by the Rod of his mouth, and by the Rod of his
afflictions and crosses; and O, now beware, lest he
come & speak to you by the iron rod of destruction!
[illegible] that the treaty which is betwixt Christ and you
[illegible] not broken: O be perswaded to lay hold upon
[illegible] time, while it is with you.

[illegible]ndly, I would say this word unto you, I
[illegible] slighting of the sad and lamentable threat-

mis-

nings of God, which he hath threatned & denounced against you, is a sad fore-runner of some sad stroaks from the Lord. Are there not many persons which slights threatnings through the want of faith? they believe not that such a threatning is true, and therefore I think it is like that God will preach to your sense, before you believe what he now preaches to your ear, I say, the day, is coming that before the threatnings of God be believed by some of you, he must preach to your sense, and make you to feel that which ye would not believe: And are there not many that will not make use of the threatnings, because they believe the threatnings is not to them? And therefore they make not particular applications of the threatnings to themselves. I confesse, I think it were good for every one of us to take home the threatnings to our own bosom.

Thirdly, some will not take and make use of the threatnings, because they mistake what is their meaning. There are some that let Christ threaten them what he will, they are still in the dark, and cry out, O what doth Christ mean by this threatning? This is clear from the practice of the Jewes, John 7. 33. 34. compared with the 35. and 36. verses. Christ threatens them with this, *Yet a little while I am with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.* Now, what hinders them to make application of this threatning? It is in verse 35. 36. *What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come? Will he goe unto the dispersed amongst the Gentils and teach the Gentils.* So they know not the meaning of the threatning, and that hinders them to apply it.

The

The fourth reason why many persons makes no[illegible] plications of the threatnings, and it is ignoran[illegible] their own condition. Some persons will be li[illegible] under such a sin and yet when that sin is threat[illegible] they will not apply it because they know not th[illegible] sin. Are there not some persons, that will not [illegible] threatning for their wordly mindednesse, beca[illegible] they call their wordly mindednesse frugality? A[illegible] there not some persons, that when a Minis[illegible] threatens against presumption they wil not take wi[illegible] it, because they think their presumption, faith a[illegible] confidence? And are there not many things threat[illegible] ed against hypocrisie and few of them applyed, a[illegible] this is because we think our hypocrisie sincerity?

Firthly, this marrs the application of threatnin[illegible] to many, because God hath a mind to destroy them therefore they do not apply threatnings: Th[illegible] is a terible word which is spoken of the so[illegible] of *Eli*, in 1 Sam: 2. 25. *Notwithstanding they hea[illegible] ned not unto the voice of their fathers because the L[illegible] would slay them.* Some God hath a mind to destro[illegible] and therefore they do not apply threatnings.

There is this sixth ground why persons will [illegible] make application of threatnings, and it is beca[illegible] ordinarly some persons are possessed with h[illegible] thoughts of themselves & too much self-love Th[illegible] is nothing marrs the application of threatnings [illegible] much as self love: we have no wil to believe a[illegible] sad thing against our selves.

Lastly, there is this which marrs the applicati[illegible] of threatnings, and it is our not knowing what a [illegible] and sinful thing it is to slight and not apply threat-ning, I confesse, I think it is a question that is hard to determine, whether the slighting of promises, or the slighting of commands, or the slighting of threat-

nin[illegible]

ings, be the greatest sin? But I am sure of this, our slighting of threatnings, is the rise of our slighting of promises, and likewise the rise of our slighting of commands. Now I shal say no more: O that ye were perswaded to hearken to God that Christ might not be provoked to depart from you, and take his farewell. And to him who is able to help you to hold him *till the breaking of the day*, we desire to give praise.

SERMON IX.

Micah 6.9. *The Lords voice cryeth unto the City, and the man of Wisdom shall see thy name, hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.*

IT is not much though a Christian *be put in a furnace hote seven times more than ordinary, if one in the form and likenesse of the Son of man walk up and down with him in the furnace.* Is it not Christs prelence which makes a wildernesse like the garden of the Lord? Is it not Christs presence which makes afflictions pleasant? Is it not Christs presence which makes a crown of thorns a crown of joy? Is it not Christs presence which makes heaven pleasant? And must it not be Christs presence that must make earth pleasant also? I confesse, desertion under the the crosse is one of the most sad and afflicting dispensations which a Christian can meet with; but however, ere long there will be a blessed exchange of cups, that in stead of the cup of bitternesse, which is presented to a Christian to drink (while he is here below) he shall have a cup of the eternall consolations that is above presented to him from the hand of the Lord.

I.

I think a Christian may be poor in possession, [illegible] rich in hope. I think a Christian may not have m[illegible] as to his sensible enjoyments, but may he not ca[illegible] his eyes unto the eternal inheritance, and cry [illegible] *yonder is my portion, in that land are my lines ca[illegible]* There are these four things that I would say unto y[illegible] before I come to the words.

The first thing which I would have you tak[illegible] notice of, is this, there are three things whic[illegible] Christian may meet with which are unspeakab[illegible] First, sometimes a Christian may meet with an u[illegible] speakable sorrow so that he cannot make language [illegible] it, because of the anxiety of his heart; but is forced [illegible] cry out that word, *wil stroak is heavier then my groa[illegible] ing.* Secondly, a Christian may meet with an u[illegible] speakable mercy, he may meet with such a mercy &c[illegible] ken of love from the hand of the Lord, that if he we[illegible] put to it, he could not make language of it, he cou[illegible] say no more to the commendation of his mercy b[illegible] this; *What shall I say more? he hath spoken it, a[illegible] himself hath done it.* Thirdly, A Christian may m[illegible] with an unspeakable joy, he may be brought to th[illegible] case and condition that he cannot make language [illegible] his joy, according to that word. *Pet.* 1. 8. *Believing ye rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*

Secondly, I would have you taking notice of this that it is exceeding much of the concernment of [illegible] Christian to believe and close with his truth, th[illegible] there is not a grain weight of affliction in his cup which infinit wisdom doth not think fit should [illegible] there, and which infinit love did not put there: *To* [illegible] and rest upon this, that infinit wisdom and [illegible] love was at the mixing of the cup, (and [illegible] heart wil carve no more out to [illegible] are able to bear) this is an help to patien[illegible]

Third[illegible]

Thirdly, I would have you taking notice of this, I think there are some Christians that is forced to bless God more for their crosses than their mercies, and that they have been forced in their darkest nights to cry out, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted.*

There is this fourthly which I would have you taking notice of, that the crosse of a Christian, it hath two faces, an outward face and an inward face, and the outward face of the crosse seems oftentimes the most unpleasant, but O if a christian could but see the inside of his crosse, he might sit down by the rivers of *Babel*, and there penn songs of praise to God, even praise for this that he hath been afflicted; O it is comfortable to the Christian that Christ hath gone to heaven by the way of the crosse that his blessed feet hath trodden that way, and that his precious lips hath drunk of that cup.

But to come to the words, we told you that there was five things in the words to be considered. First, that here was an excellent exhortation given to the people of *Israel* and *Samaria*, which in short is this, *Hear the voice of the rod, and who hath appointed it*; and from this exhortation ye may take notice of these five things. First, That every crosse and sad dispensation which a Christian meets with, it hath a voice and a language in it, therefore sayes he, *hear the voice of the rod*, as if he had said, take notice what the Rod sayes, and what it calls for from you. The second thing to take notice of from this command and exhortation is this, that it is the duty of a christian to observe and give obedience unto what the Rod speaks and calls for: therefore is the command given forth, *hear the voice of the rod*. The third thing that we take notice of from this command is, that there is a great unwillingnesse in persons to hear what the

Rod speaks, and therefore the command is put h
hear the voice of the rod. Fourthly take notice of
that the voice of the Rod, and the voice of him
hath appointed it, are one and the same very th
therefore these two are knit together, *hear the*
of the rod & of him who hath appointed it. The
this lastly which we would have you taking notice
from this command and exhortation. It is a g
point of spiritual wisdom for a Christian to take
and hear the voice of the Rod, therefore it is said,
men of wisdom shall see thy Name. It is not ev
man that can take up what the Rod speaks, it is o
the man that is indued with much heavenly wisd
from God.

Now as for the first thing that we spake from
words, viz. That every rod which a Christian me
with, it hath a voice in it. Before I speak to this,
would have you to take along these considerations.

First, it is a singular and most remarkable step
the good will of God, when he doth manifest th
meaning of a rod to a person or a people *Job* 33. 1
He openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instructi
which is brought in as a singular favour from Go
that is, he makes them to know what the rod speak
Elihu puts such a note of mercy upon this, that he
thinks it a step of delivery from the rod, *He deliver*
the poor from affliction, how is this, that *he ope*
their ears, and seals their instruction? It is, whe
God makes a person to take up the meaning of th
Rod, for when he makes them to understand th
voice of the Rod, it is half a delivery from the Rod,
do you not know this, that when the cause of a disea
is known, it is half healed? So when the end tha
God hath in sending rods, is known and taken up
we may say it is half removed.

Second

Secondly, the Christians of old hath taken much pains to know the voice of the Rods that they met with, as is clear from, 2 *Sam.* 21. 1. where the land of *Israel* being three years under famine, *David* went and enquired the cause of that Rod, and it is likewise clear from *Job* 7. 20. where *Job* is exceeding desirous to know why God set him up as a mark for his arrows, and that he was become a burden to himself.

Thirdly, We would have you to take notice of this, that it is exceeding anxious for a tender Christian to be under a silent Rod, to be under such a dispensation that he knows not the language of it, this is clear in *Job* 3. 23. where *Job* makes this the capstone of his sorrow, that his way was hid, that is, knew not what was the reason of Gods contending with him after such a way, as likewise it is clear in *Job* 10. 2. where Job is put to propose that question to God, *Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me?*

The fourth *Consideration*, that we would have you taking a long with you, is this, it is exceeding hard for a Christian to profite by a Rod till once he take up the meaning of it, and I shall give you these three grounds, why it is so hard for a Christian to profite by a Rod till he knew the voice and meaning of it: First, Because it is hard for a Christian to win to submission to the Rod, till he know the voice of it, it is the knowledge of the meaning of the Rod that makes a Christian cry out, *I was dumb and opened not my mouth*: Secondly, Because as long as the meaning of the Rod is hid from a Christian, he knoweth not what remedy to go about to deliver himsel from that Rod, but when he knoweth the reason of Gods contending with him, he hath a clear way before him how to win out from the crosse. Thirdly, this is the reason why a Christian

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cannot profit by the rod till he know the voice
meaning of it; he cannot win to a solide clo
with this truth, that God is in the Rod, till he
to the knowledge of the voice of the rod in s
measure; there is nothing will help a Christian m
to cry out, God is in the rod, than this, his know
the reason of Gods contending with him.

There is this fifth consideration that we wo
propose, a Christian may be long under a rod be
he know the voice and language of it; we conce
this is clear in 2 Sam. 21. 1. where the land of *Isr*
is under three years famine before *David* could t
up the reason of Gods contending with them: it is
to be supposed but *David* had made frequent supp
cations to God for understanding the meaning
that Rod, and yet there are three years interven
before he can know it.

The last consideration that we would propose un
you, when a Christian wins to take up the voice a
language of the Rod, he ought not to delay, but p
sently go about and answer it, this is clear in the p
ctice of *David* when he knew the reason of Go
contending with him, he immediatly sets about
remove it. I confesse it is a fault amongst many, th
are more desirous to have their crosses removed, th
to have their crosses sanctified unto them; some pr
to have the bitternesse out of the crosse, more than
have the bitterness of sin removed out of the cr

Now in speaking to the first thing in the wor
, That every Rod and Dispensation of God h
and language in it: I shal speak a little
r things: First, How a Christian m
e up the meaning of the Rod in pa
ons. Secondly, I would speak a little
es in taking up the voice and langua

such a rod and afflicting dispensation. Thirdly, would speak to this, how a Christian may be helpt to give obedience to the voice of the Rod. Fourthly, I shal speak a little to eight or nine special voices which the Rod oftentimes hath; As for the first of these, viz. how a Christian may win to take up the meaning of the Rod and sad dispensation, I shal prescribe unto you these six wayes.

First, Be making serious application to the throne of grace, that God would give you light concerning the Rod; This is remarkably clear in that instance Gen. 25. 22. where *Rebecca* being under such particular Rod, and she knew not Gods way in it, therefore she went and enquired of the Lord, and she received a particular and distinct answer to her case; and it is also clear in the practice of *David* 2. Sam 21. 1. *Israel* being under a rod of famine, *David* went and enquired of the Lord concerning the meaning of it, and he met with a distinct answer. And this is likewise clear in, Job 10. 2. where Job being in the dark, concerning the meaning of the rod, he desires *that God would shew him wherefore he contends with him.* I will tell you seven sad cases which a Christian may be put to, of which Christ is an excellent resolver: The first case which a Christian may be put to, which Christ hath exceeding good skill to resolve, and it is that, *Song* 1. 7. *Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noon*, &c. When a Christian knoweth not where Christ is feeding, to go to him, he will sweetly resolve that question, for we may know this, a Christian may be brought to these two steps of desertion. First, Christ may be gone, And secondly, ye knew not in all the world where to find him, as in Job. 20. 13. in these

stan-

nce of *Mary*, and in *Job*, 23. 3. *Job* hath not
God, but also he knoweth not where to find h
The second case which Christ hath exceeding g
ill to resolve, is this, *Who is the Lord, that I may*
believe in him? That case or question which the bl
man was put to, *Joh* 9. 36. Or will not Christ we
ly resolve that question, Is there any person t
hath this question, *Who is Christ that I may believe*
him? The third case or question which Christ ha
exceeding good skil to resolve, *Good master, wh*
shall I do to inherit eternal life? Is there any he
that is put to that question? go to Christ, and he c
sweetly solve it you. The fourth question whi
Christ can best resolve, is that question whi
Paul had, *What wilt thou have me to do?* T
fifth case in which it is best to go to Christ
get it resolved, when a person is brought to th
strait, I *know not the mind of the Lord*: go t
God and humbly ask, Rom. *O why am I thus*
There is this sixth case, and it is, *Job* 7 20. *I ha*
sinned, and what shall I do to thee, O thou preser
of men? When thou art put to this case, Christ c
answer sweetly thus, *Only acknowledge thy in*
quity. The last case which Christ can sweetly r
solve, is in the word before the Text *Wherewith s*
I come before the Lord? If thou be put to his que
on, no answer can be given to it but this, *The sac*
fices of the Lord are a broken and contrite heart. N
this is the first way how a Christian may win to kn
the voice and meaning of the Rod, even to make s
this supplication to God, that he would make kn
them his Name.

Here is this second way by which a Chris
win to know the voice and meaning of the R
Rod was timed to thee when thy heart
u

der much distance from God, that probably is the meaning of the Rod, *It is good for thee to draw near God*, or if the Rod be timed unto a Christian when is much taken up in pursuit after the things of the rld, and if thy Rod tryst thee when thou art un- much formality in going about duties, then by all earance that is the voice of the Rod to thee, to *up thy self to take hold on God*: So if a Christi- would win to know the meaning of a Rod, let him pare his present frame with the timing of the d unto him.

The third way how a Christian may win to know voice and meaning of the Rod, is by reflecting on manner and circumstances of the Rod; for this certain the sins of a people or person may be en- ven on the Rod in very legible letters, *so that that runs may read them*: There are some times at the Rod doth preach our sins so plainly, that we ed not to interpret it; this is clear *Judges* 1 6. 7. ere is such a relation betwixt *Adonibezek's* judge, nt; and his sin, that he might read his judgements he did his sins in his stroak, saith he, *Three score d ten Kings having their thumbs and their great s cut off, gathered their meat under my table as ave done, so God hath requited me*, &c. For now s he taken prisoner and his thumbs and great toes off: and it is clear from that word, *Solomon* h, *Prov.* 21. 23. *He that stoppeth his ear at the of the poor, he shall cry and God shall not hear* n. Zach. 7. 13. *Therefore it is come to passe t as he cryed and they would not hear so they cryed d I would not hear, saith the Lord of hosts*. Where may see a divin proportion and analogy betwixt Rod and the sin.

The fourth way how a Christian may win to know

know the voice and meaning of the rod, and it is observing what hath been the mind of the Lord, and what he called for from his people in Scripture, when they were put under such a Rod and anxious dispensation; Search what was Gods mind to the godly in Scripture under such a Rod, and by all appearance it is yet his mind in the same cross, according to the general rule, *Rom. 15. 4. For whatsoever things are written afore time were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*

The fifth way for a christian to win to know the meaning of the Rod, is to be much in observing the circumstances of the Rod, there may be circumstances in a Rod by which a Christian may win to exceeding much light concerning what is the Lords mind by such a Rod; it is known the observing of the circumstances of a rod will help a christian to three things. First, That such a Rod is from the hand of the Lord. Secondly, that God in the midst of wrath remembreth mercy, Thirdly, It will help a Christian to know the voice and language of the Rod, sometimes in the crosse it self, a Christian cannot tell love, and yet in the circumstances of the crosse he may win to read very much love.

There is this sixth & last way how a Christian may win to the knowledge of the voice and meaning of the Rod, and it is to be considering that all the Rods and dispensations which a Christian meets with, have one of these three ends. First, The Rod is either sent to a Christian that he may mortifie his predominant idols; Or, secondly, for exercise of his predominant grace. Or, else thirdly, that he may be put to the exercise of that which ought to be his predominant [illegible] These are voices and languages of the crosse which

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Christian meets with. And I would only by the way lay these two things to you. First, It is easier to bear a Rod patiently which is for the trial and exercise of our predominant grace, than to bear a Rod patiently which is for the mortifying of our predominant idols: there is no Rod which a Christian can bear worse, than the Rod which strikes at the root of his predominant idols: so a proud man can bear any cross better nor reproach, and a worldly minded man can bear any cross better than poverty, so the cross which stands in direct opposition to our predominant lusts, we have great difficulty to bring our hearts to patient submission under it, are there not many, that when their idols are stricken, they cry out with Micah in Judges 18. 24. *They have taken away my gods and what have I more?* Is it not certain that when God strikes sometimes at the root of our predominant idols, we cry out with *Jonah, that it is better for me to die then to live*: Though I may say, the cross which we have least will to meet with, is ordinarily best for us: For (if so we may speak) our will and our well are seldome or never knit together but precious Christ, his will and our well are sometimes knit together. Secondly I would say this by the way, there are ordinarily some analogie betwix our cross and our sin: if the *Egyptians* did kill all the male children of the *Israelites* by casting them into the river, God doth likewise kill all the first born in the land of *Egypt*, and if *Nadab* and *Abihu* offer strange fire upon Gods altar, he will consume them with fire from heaven; and if the *Sodomites* be taken up with the fire of lust, God will bring down fire from heaven and consume them.

Now the second thing which we promised to speak a little unto, was to some mistakes

Christians have concerning the meaning of the

And first, many thinks (indeed) the cross s wrath when it speaks love, and some when they not read love in the hand of God, they think impossible to read love in his heart: some thinks love and the rod cannot be together at all: God may never love a person more nor when correcting him. But first, I would say to a per under that mistake, we never know by any of t things whether love or hatred belongs to the per that is afflicted, *For all things happen alike to all; to happens to the fool, so happens it to the wise m to the righteous, even as to the wicked.* Secondly would say this to the believer that is under this m take he reads wrong that reads wrath only upon t cross, for it is certain love is written in dark cha racters upon it, and the spiritual man he may re them: Hence it is: *Heb.* 12.5, 6. We are com manded to remember the exhortation that speaks un us, as unto sons: *My son, despise not thou the cha stenings of the Lord, nor faint when thou art reb of him: for whom the Lord loveth, he chastneth, scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*

The second mistake concerning the meaning the cross, is, some thinks God can never answer t prayers so long as he is plaguing them, according that strange divinity, *Job* 9.16. *If I had called, and had answered me, yet would I not believe that he h hearkned unto my voice.* So this is the mistake, all answers of their prayers are nothing, if God be c sending with them.

The 3. great mistake concerning the meaning of rod, is when persons begins to dispute their inte when they meet with such a rod and sad dispens and when they do not (indeed) see what is the reaso

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Gods contending with them when he puts them in the furnace, presently to sit down, and reject their confidence, and cast away their hope; this is certainly a great mistake of the meaning of the rod.

The 4. great mistake of the voice and language of Gods threatening rod, is for a person to think religion but vanity, and an empty thing under the cross, a christian may be brought to this: now I would not give a stick for godliness, it is nothing worth at all, as is clear from, *Psal.* 73.13. when he takes notice, *he was plagued every morning, and the wicked was in prosperity about him*, he cryes out, *Verily I have washed my hands in innocency, and cleansed my heart in vain*; yea, it is hard for a person not to cast at religion, when God is contending with him. O it is hard to have a great respect unto the wayes of godliness under the cross.

There is this fifth mistake under the cross, and it is to dispute the fellowship a Christian hath with God according to that word of *Gideon*, *Judges* 6.13. *If the Lord be with us, how then is all this evil come upon us?* The Christian will cry out, I cannot reconcile Gods heart and his hand, I cannot reconcile love in God, and his being with me, and this cross and rod.

Now thirdly, I would speak a little to this, how a Christian may be helped to obey the voice of the rod, and we conceive if ye will take along these things with you, ye may be helped to obey what the rod calls for at your hands.

And first then, if the rod call for the mortifying of such a particular lust and idol, it is incumbent for you presently to sit down and bring up your heart in a spiritual detestation of such an idol, that if

bill of divorce to them and cry out, *What have I any more to do with idols?* and say to them, *Get you hence, and cast them away to the moles and to the bats.*

There is a second way or help how a Christian may win to the obedience of the voice of the rod, & it is, if the voice of the rod be for the mortifying of such an idol, I intreat you presently sit down & study the disadvantage of such an idol, & study also what harm there is by keeping thy soul constantly knit to it, & when the voice of the rod is this to thee; O quit such an idol, or such a *Delilah*, thou must then study to know what it is to thy disadvantage to keep such an idol, and what it is to thy advantage to quit it. I confess there are some that their idols are mortified to their light before they be mortified to their affections; yea there are some, they have a constant mortification, their idols are mortified and dispatched before they be mortified to their idols.

Thirdly, if the voice of the rod be this, stir up such a grace, and be much in the exercise and practice of it, I say, study to know that there is as much spiritual advantage in the real and spiritual exercise of such a grace, as ye can lose by all the rods ye can meet with. Is it not certain that *Job* gained as much spiritual advantages by the exercise of his faith, and of patience; yea, much more than in losing all the things he lost? if a Christian once knew that his rich profited in the exercise of his grace, there would be a rod sent for the trial and exercise of his grace, he would take it cheerfully in his arms.

The fourth way how a christian may be helped to obey the voice of the rod, and it is, if the voice of the rod be for the tryal of thy predominant grace, the exercise of it, then, I say, consider this;

the tryal and exercise of thy predominant grace by the rod it shal have (if it be sanctified) a glorious and excellent issue and peace, it is the rod that hath most noble advantages that is immediatly erected for the tryal of thy predominant grace.

The sixth way how a Christian may win to obey the voice of the Rod, and it is, if the voice of the Rod be that thou should set about the exercise of such a dutie, then endeavour seriously that all impediments and lets to that duty be laid aside; as if the crosse call for the exercise of faith, or if the cross call for the exercise of prayer, then I say remove all things that may be impediments to hinder thee from the exercise thereof; or from the exercise of faith: leave (as it were) thy servants and thy asses at the foot of the mount, and go thou up and sacrifice all thy idols and lusts;

The seventh and last way how a christian may be helped to win to obey the voice of the rod, if the voice of the rod be to be much in the exercise of such a duty, than study to have the lustre of duty, and the beauty thereof commended unto thee. O our prayer is a thing which doth much good to us, I think this is the reason why God hath contended with many; would make duties sweet to them, and he would make sin bitter.

Now the fourth thing that I shal speak a little unto, is to what ought to be a christians duty while he is walking under a silent rod, and knoweth not the voice of it; and I would give you these five directions how a Christian should carry himself under a silent rod.

First he would know God to be just, though he knoweth not for what he contends with him.

2. He would be serious in making supplication

[illegible], to know the distinct meaning of such a [illegible] confesse sometimes we take the rod to be silent, [illegible] cause we cannot hear the voice of it; but often [illegible] the silence of the rod is from this, that we know [illegible] the voice, of it, & we hear it not though he speak to [illegible] in an audible language, but if a Christian be [illegible] a silent rod, it becomes him then to go to God [illegible] this, I have sorned & [illegible] no more, shew me where [illegible] I have offended.

There is this third direction which I would [illegible] a Christian under a silent rod, he would be [illegible] to know what is the reason of Gods keeping up [illegible] mind from him in such a Rod: I say, when the [illegible] is dark, and the crosse is silent, it is suitable [illegible] to say, what is the reason of this that God doth [illegible] let me understand the voice & language of the Ro[illegible] I confesse there [illegible] be sad things hinted at [illegible] God puts a Christian under dark and dumb cross[illegible] however although it be so, I think it is good for [illegible] to be walking submissively in the dark, for he [illegible] guide the blind in the way that they know not; so [illegible] it is better for us to have dumb and silent [illegible] than to have a speaking crosse.

The fourth direction, The Christian would [illegible] to bring his heart to a tender and spirituall fram[illegible] for sometimes our not understanding the voi[illegible] the rod, it is because we are not spirituall.

Lastly, I would give this direction to the Chri[illegible] in who is under a dark and silent crosse, study [illegible] that time to have thy heart most united to Ch[illegible] for at that time thou is most ready to fall: O [illegible] is a time when the devil fishes most, because th[illegible] Christians drumly water (so to speak) O [illegible] [illegible], the devil never gets any advantage ov[illegible] [illegible]tian so much as when he knows not the m[illegible] of the crosse! I confesse the devil will tell y[illegible]

false meaning of a crosse, he can interpret the language of a crosse after another way than God doth interpret it.

Now being to choose our discourse, I shall name these eight or nine Observations concerning the crosse, which I would have you taking notice of.

First, when a Christian doth first meet with a crosse, he may be patient and submissive under it, and yet if the threed of the affliction be spun out to any length, he may turn impatient. I confesse it is not much the first day that the crosse meets with us to be patient; but let the crosse ly on us, then we will cry out, why is it that God deals thus with me? this is clear in the practice of Job, when first he met with the cross, he could take it in his arms, and cry out, *The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be His Name.* But let the crosse ly a little while on Job, then he will cry out, I *choose strangling and death rather than life*: A green wound is half whole (as we use to speak) but let once our wound begin to feaster, then we will be impatient.

The second Observation which we would have you to take notice of concerning the cross, There are five sorts of blasphemy which one that is under a crosse may fall into. First, he may fall into that blasphemy of calling God unjust, according to that word, *Ezek.* 18. 25. *Yet ye say, the way of the Lord is not equal*, &c. The second sort of blasphemy is, when we call God unfaithful, according to that strange word, *Jer.* 15. 18. *Wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar, and as water that fails?* O do we not think that God is not half so good as his word under the crosse? The third sort of blasphemy is, when we call God weak, there are sometimes we are brought to [illegible], *Is there no balm in Gilead? and is there no*

[illegible]

[illegible]ian there, my streake is grievous, and my wo[illegible] [illegible]rable. Sometimes when we are under th[illegible] [illegible], we think it is above Gods power to set us fr[illegible] [illegible] it. The fourth sort of blasphemy which a ma[illegible] [illegible] have under the crosse, and that is when he charg[illegible] [illegible] God with changeablnesse, I think Christia[illegible] [illegible]der the crosse, are like men first going to Sea, wh[illegible] [illegible]ey go first out from the Haven or by a Rock, the[illegible] [illegible]ink that they are standing still, but the land besid[illegible] them is moving, stirring; so when first we come und[illegible] the crosse, we think God is cheangable, but we a[illegible] still the same. The fifth sort of blasphemy which o[illegible] may have under the crosse, and that is, when h[illegible] chargeth God with forgetfulnesse; you know th[illegible] forgetfulnesse is the property of an ingrate man, an[illegible] O, if you call God ingrate or unthankful, you ma[illegible] call him any thing. I confesse, I think Christ forge[illegible] nothing of a christian but his wrongs.

The third Observation concerning the crosse, [illegible] [illegible], It is a speaking evidence of the want of a Son[illegible] [illegible]e frame, if the crosse do hinder us in the exerc[illegible] of duties. I confesse little profiting under the cro[illegible] speaks this much, that either we are not sons, or h[illegible] not a son-like frame, for these who are the Lo[illegible] children, when folly is bound to them, the Rod[illegible] correction drives it away; there are many of us [illegible] our afflictions are of *Ahaz's* frame, we sin more a[illegible] more in our afflictions.

The fourth Observation which I would give y[illegible] concerning the crosse, is this, there are four thi[illegible] which a Christian would take up concerning [illegible] cross. First, He would take up unspeakable wisdo[illegible] his crosse. Secondly, He would take up unspeak[illegible] love therein. Thirdly, He would take up unspeak[illegible] Justice and holinesse in his crosse; And fourthly,

would take up these great advantages, but flouted to him from the spiritual use-making of his crosses. Some Christians, they can read wisdom, justice and holinesse on a crosse, before they can read love upon it, but however it is good to take up all these sons in the crosses, and sad dispensations which you meet with.

There is this fifthly which I would say concerning the cross, there is not a crosse and sad dispensation which a Christian meets with, but it is a gift and royal donation sent by the hand of Christ to him: there are some they look upon the promises as gifts, but I say to thee, thou must look upon thy crosses as gifts also, *Phlip. 1. 29. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.* And there are some likewise that look upon their sensible enjoyments, but not on their crosse as gifts. I say, if once a Christian [illegible] to know that the cross is a gift, he would likewise vein to patience under the cross.

The sixth observation concerning the cross, there are some peaceable fruits of righteousness that redounds to a Christian which is rightly exercised under the cross, 12. *Heb 11. Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless it yeeldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby.* I say sometimes the rod of a Christian is like *Arons* Rod, it will bud and blossome in a night, and bring forth pleasant fruit.

The seventh Observation is, the most rare enjoyments of a Christian are trysted to the time of his being under the cross, when was it that Jacob saw the Angels of God descending and ascending upon that ladder? was it not when he was forced to lye the open field? when was it that these three [illegible]

[illegible] of the Son of Man? was it [illegible] the furnace, when it was hot se[illegible] [illegible] ordinary? when was it that Je[illegible] [illegible] vision of God? was it not when he was [illegible] [illegible] for the Testimony of Christ? wh[illegible] [illegible] saw the visions of God? was [illegible] [illegible] sitting by the river *Chebar* in [illegible] [illegible] captivity? And when was it that *Steph*[illegible] [illegible] open and saw Christ standing at [illegible] [illegible] of God? was it not when they were st[illegible] [illegible] to death for the Testimony of Jesus Chri[illegible] [illegible] the most remarkable enjoyments of a Christi[illegible] [illegible] under the cross: According to that wo[illegible] [illegible] *Psalmist, to the righteous there ariseth light* [illegible] *darkness.*

The eight Observation that we would prop[illegible] [illegible] the crosse. Oftentimes God trysts joy [illegible] [illegible] under the crosse, when a Christian [illegible] [illegible] to lose his hope, and all things (as it we[illegible] [illegible] dark about him, then doth light arise u[illegible] [illegible] to that wonderful & strange expre[illegible] [illegible] *At the Evening time it shall be li*[illegible] [illegible] *more appearance of darknesse coming* [illegible] [illegible] time it shall be light; Is it [illegible] [illegible] hath been sitting down at the [illegible] [illegible] of his afflictions, crying out, *My hope and* [illegible] *is perished from the Lord,* and yet the L[illegible] [illegible] said to him even by his dispensations, thou [illegible] [illegible] have we not sometimes been casting away [illegible] [illegible] and the Lord hath loosed our bonds, and [illegible] [illegible] *Peter* when he was loosed from his pri[illegible] [illegible] we had seen a vision?

Lastly, I would say this to commend the cross [illegible] [illegible] in the Scripture that may [illegible] [illegible] that the cross is not such a [illegible]

many takes it to be. The [illegible]
[illegible]at word, *James* 1. 2. *My brethren, [illegible]*
when ye fall into diverse temptations. There are
things in that expression, which may make it [illegible]
First, a Christian should count it all joy; [illegible]
been so strange if he had said, count it [illegible]
when ye are afflicted, but, O that is [illegible]
all joy when you are afflicted. That [illegible]
makes it strange, *Count it all joy* [illegible]
diverse temptations, That is rejoice [illegible]
more when you meet with many crosses [illegible]
strange expression which may commend [illegible]
[illegible] it is that word, *Job* 5. 17. *Happy is the man* [illegible]
God correcteth &c. There is very [illegible]
in such a lot & dispensation: Some of us [illegible]
is no people so cursed as these who are [illegible]
I say, a Christians afflictions are no [illegible]
blessings. The third strange expression [illegible]
mend the crosse, *Job* 5. [illegible]
nine shall thou laugh, &c. Not to have a [illegible]
[illegible] were) for all the crosses & afflictions that [illegible]
The fourth strange expression which [illegible]
he crosse is that word, *Rom* 5. [illegible]
tion, &c. The last expression which [illegible]
[illegible], and it is the glorious ends [illegible]
[illegible]rsons which is exercised under [illegible]
[illegible] that word, *James* 1. 10. *Blessed* [illegible]
[illegible]reth temptations, for when he [illegible]
[illegible]e crown of life. I say, let a [illegible]
[illegible] this, *That in six evils* [illegible]
[illegible]en no evil shal come near [illegible]
[illegible]t to never so much afflic[illegible]
[illegible] with this, that his Sav[illegible]
[illegible] down in the earth, [illegible]
[illegible] and let him likewise [illegible]